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YOUNG'S
SUGGESTIONS
FOR THE
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OF THE
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SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

CONVERSION OF THE WORLD,

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

TO

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

BY ROBERT YOUNG.

"The world is my parish."—WESLEY.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."—JOHN iii. 17.

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PREFACE.

In this age of book-making, when so many works are issuing from the press, it may be fairly presumed that their authors are influenced by different motives. One probably writes to improve his finances, a second to display his talents, and a third to benefit his fellow-men. If the author of the following work be not greatly mistaken, his only motive in thus obtruding himself upon the notice of the public is a sincere desire to promote the salvation of souls; and if its publication should in any degree contribute to that end, he will feel amply rewarded, whatever the world's opinion may be of it.

The writer having laboured for ten years in the Mission-field, the conversion of the world has long been to him a subject of deep interest; and if any Christians should adopt, and faithfully work out, the plan which he has ventured to suggest, for the accomplishment of that important object, he will feel greatly obliged by their communicating to him the result; it being his intention to follow up the present publication by others bearing on the same

subject. He sends forth this product of his pen with considerable diffidence; but he sends it in the name of the world's Redeemer, and earnestly prays that it may be made a blessing to many souls.

9, *Earl-Street*, *Westminster*.
Sept. 1841.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE Author feels grateful for the kind reception his "Suggestions" have met with; and he takes this opportunity of expressing his obligations to those Ministers of different religious denominations who have, in various ways, so kindly recommended the volume containing them. He has added to the present Edition many important particulars, which, it is hoped, will be found a real improvement. As several esteemed friends have already written him in compliance with the request contained in the Preface to the First Edition, he hopes ere long to publish another small volume detailing the success of those efforts in the conversion of souls, which in the following pages he has endeavoured to advocate; and in the mean time he would respectfully solicit other communications on the same important subject.

December, 1841.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Conversion—Its nature and importance—State of the unchristianized world—Pagans—Mahometans—Jews—Christendom—Its chief city—Morals—Politics—Literature—Commerce—Conversion of the world to be expected—Atonement universal—Adaptation of Christianity for universal diffusion—Intimations of Providence—Pledges already received—Declarations of Scripture.

Pages 9—29

CHAPTER II.

Human agency in the conversion of the world—Truth the instrument of conversion—Lay-agency—Bishop of Chester's opinion on the subject—Religion gives a moral fitness for teaching others—Inspires men with a desire to be so employed—This duty enjoined—Practice of the primitive Church—Hilary's testimony—Divine agency in the conversion of the world—Pentecost—Subsequent success of the Gospel—Divine agency still necessary—Importance of keeping this always in view.

Pages 29—48

CHAPTER III.

Obstacles to the conversion of the world. A defective exhibition of divine truth—Ministerial inconsistency —Hypocrisy in the church—Worldly conformity—Disunion—Covetousness—Lukewarmness—Idolizing pulpit talent—Evils in the domestic circle. Ungodly marriages; neglect of family discipline; speaking evil of Ministers before children—Tolerating gross offences in the church—Appointing unconverted men to office—Ungodly choirs.

Pages 48—75

CHAPTER IV.

Individual effort—Importance of system—Plan for the world's conversion proposed—Its scriptural character; simplicity; and probable results—Slow progress of Christianity—More vigorous and systematic efforts required—Facilities for working the proposed measure among the Wesleyan Methodists—Numerons advantages connected with the personal exertions of private Christians.

Pages 75—96

CHAPTER V.

Importance of Missionary effort—Number of Missionaries that should be employed—The church in circumstances to support them—Contributions for the spread of the Gospel—Items from the income and

expenditure of the United Kingdom—Startling calculations—Easy method of raising Funds—Contributions of the Wesleyans—Temperance movement—To neglect the world's conversion implicates the Christian character—Absurdity of praying without giving—Scriptural standard of giving—Missionary Societies should not interfere with each other's fields of labour—Importance of encouraging Native Missionaries—The aggressive principle amongst new converts from the Heathen—Missionaries and openings furnished in proportion to the liberality of the church—The spirit of martyrdom still to be cherished.

Pages 97—119.

CHAPTER VI.

Systematic effort consistent with Divine Sovereignty—Connexion between means and the end—Examples of success—Twelve persons brought to God by a female—Thirty by the efforts of three young men—A Wesleyan Class doubled its numbers every three months—Six members of a family led to Christ by a new convert—Effect of a word spoken in a draper's shop—Bread found after many days—Christians teaching others by detailing the particulars of their own conversion—How to speak to others with effect—Letter from a lady.

Pages 119—132

CHAPTER VII.

No neutrality in reference to souls—Unfaithful professors—Hidden talents—Blood of souls—Many in hell that might have been in heaven had Christians done their duty—What the lost may probably say on the subject—The cruelty of being accessory to the loss of souls—Opposition of such conduct to Christ—Importance of saving a soul from death—Multitudes of sins prevented—The glorious results that may follow the conversion of but *one* soul.

Pages 133—154

SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

Scriptural conversion is a *gracious* change, extending to all the faculties of man, and producing in his fallen nature a complete and saving renovation. It is a change in his *understanding;* for "God, who commandeth light to shine out of darkness, shineth into his heart," opening the eyes of his understanding to know himself and "the things which are freely given to him of God." It is a change in his *will;* for, being made willing in the day of God's power, he no longer resists the Holy Ghost, but humbly acquiesces in the plan of saving grace, and in the various dispensations of divine Providence. It is a change in his *affections;* for they no longer wander after forbidden objects, or cleave to the

dust of the earth, but are "set on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." It is a change in his *deportment;* for having "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," and having "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," he "walks righteously and godly and soberly in the present world." It is a change in his *condition;* for previously he was a "slave to divers lusts and pleasures," but is now "free from the bondage of sin and death;" he was an "enemy to God by reason of wicked works," but is now his friend, and "delights to do whatsoever he commands;" he was a "child of wrath, even as others," but is now a "child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus," and has "received the Spirit of adoption, whereby he cries, Abba, Father."

Such is the nature of scriptural conversion. Man is not merely reformed, but "created anew in Christ Jesus." Having, as a penitent sinner, approached the mercy-seat, he has, in the exercise of simple faith, obtained the forgiveness of sin, and an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified; and thus "old things have passed away, and, behold, all things have become new."

To whatever region of our depraved world we direct our attention, we shall perceive human nature in circumstances imperatively requiring this spiritual regeneration. The Scripture declares that "all have sinned," and history with ten thousand tongues bears witness to its truth. Man is guilty, and therefore exposed to the penalties of the violated law; unholy, and therefore unfit for the paradise of God. Hence the necessity of conversion.

If the population of the globe be estimated at one thousand millions, it is probable that six hundred and fifty millions are the wretched devotees of pagan superstition; one hundred and forty-seven millions the deluded followers of the false prophet; three millions the unbelieving and scattered seed of God's ancient people; and but two hundred millions, or a fifth of the whole human family, the reputed disciples of the blessed Jesus. Thus is the world lying in wickedness; and such is the condition of a fearful preponderance of its inhabitants, that nothing but a scriptural conversion can save them from the wrath to come. This will appear from an examination of the moral state of the different divisions of mankind, just specified.

HEATHENS.—They have their gods many. "The objects of worship in Tartary, the

Philippine Islands, and amongst many of the savages of Africa, are not only the Sun, Moon, and Stars, but the four elements. At Tonquin the several quarters of the earth are deified, and almost every where evil demons. In China a multitude of imaginary spirits are worshipped, which are supposed to preside over the seasons of the year, over rivers and mountains, and even the door and hearth of the house, and to influence all the concerns of men. In some of the South Sea Islands, birds, fishes, and even reptiles are deified; and in many places, under various forms, the great destroyer himself. In no place, however, is the polytheism of the Heathens so gross as in Hindostan, where not fewer than three hundred and thirty millions of deities receive the adorations of their deluded and wretched votaries."* Nor are the devotees of Heathenism "innocent children of nature," as some have thought proper to designate them, but "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, and maliciousness;" and how can they be otherwise, when they worship

> "Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
> Whose attributes are rage, revenge, and lust?"

* Young's "Gods of the Heathen."

Eighteen hundred years ago the Apostle, in his first chapter to the Romans, gave a description of heathen morals as correct as it was humiliating; and if the testimony of Missionaries and other persons who have resided in heathen lands is to be credited, it would appear that in all the things mentioned by the Apostle in that description, are the nations still defiled who live without God in the world. The Rev. G. Arthur, recently returned from India, has stated that when he presented an intelligent native with a translation of the first chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, he seemed amazed after having read it, and exclaimed, "Who told him about us? Paul was never here." This simple fact speaks volumes as to the moral state of the Heathen; for had the likeness, in the chapter, drawn by the pencil of Inspiration not been very striking, it would not have so immediately and powerfully impressed that pagan's mind. Heathenism is, in the present day, associated with civilization, and barbarism; with intelligence, and illiteracy: it has its magnificent temples in the cities of the East; and its rude altars in the forests of the West, and in the isles of the South; but in every connexion and locality it is the patron of cruelty and vice. Some of

its temples are filled with the grossest abominations, and a worship of unmixed crime is presented therein. Many of its altars are covered with costly sacrifices, and stained with human blood ; whilst in most of its sacred festivals the flood-gates of vice are thrown wide open, and intemperance and licentiousness, bursting forth like a mighty torrent, sweep away every attractive virtue, and leave nothing but misery and degradation behind. The more devoted a Heathen is, the greater must be his wickedness ; for his religion is crime, and its virtues amongst the most polluting vices that ever stained the character of man. Now as the scripture tells us that "the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," it is most obvious that the Heathen who are thus clearly portrayed by an unerring hand, must perish without the converting grace of God.

MAHOMETANS.—The founder of this sect was a native of Mecca in Arabia, and lived in the sixth century. He professed to be a great prophet, sent by God to reform the world, and to have held several conferences with the

angel Gabriel, who, according to his statement, communicated to him from time to time the various things contained in the Koran, which were to regulate the faith and practice of his followers. When he first assumed the character of a prophet, few received his doctrine; but being of a subtle and enterprising spirit, he persevered, and ultimately succeeded by stratagem in multiplying his converts, who assisted him in the promulgation of his faith by means of the sword. His religion is at present professed by the Turks, Arabs, Persians, and by many in Africa and India. It is a mixture of Heathenism, Judaism, and heretical Christianity; and notwithstanding its palpable absurdities, it exerts a most potent influence over its infatuated recipients. It recognizes one God, but denies the atonement; and places the salvation of its adherents in fastings, pilgrimages, and frequent ablutions of the body; while it allows the gratification of the most debasing passions of the human heart, and promises to the faithful a paradise of sensual pleasure every way adapted to the taste of the most voluptuous. Now as we are told in the Word of God, that "out of the mouth of the false prophet" there came "unclean spirits," even "the spirits of devils," and that they who

were influenced by them were "cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," we cannot but think the allusion is to the false prophet of Mecca, whose unclean followers, without a spiritual regeneration, must undoubtedly feel the bitter pains of the second death.

JEWS.—The ancestors of this interesting people were taught to expect a great deliverer; but when he made his appearance, he not agreeing with their preconceived notions on the subject, his own received him not, but wickedly rejected him. The same principle of hostility is cherished by their offspring; for "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge;" and although this has been the cause of their dispersion, and made them as a proverb and bye-word amongst all people, they still continue to look for a Messiah to accord with their educational prejudices. They are a scattered and cruelly persecuted race, retaining amongst all nations their distinctive character, and emphatically "minding earthly things." Now if it be true that there is no name given under heaven amongst men, whereby man can be saved, but the name Christ Jesus, what is to become of those children of Abraham, who trust in the

fables of their Talmuds, rather than in the Scriptures, and who hope for salvation through a disannulled covenant, rather than through Christ the Lord? Without conversion it is evident they cannot be saved; for, "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father;" and "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha."

CHRISTIANS.—If we look through the length and breadth of Christendom, we shall at once discover, without any uncharitable judging, that all are not Israel that are called Israel; but that many of them are far from God, and some participating in every species of demoralization of which human nature is capable. Take London for an example: and here you find infidelity openly avowed; the Scriptures audaciously ridiculed; the Sabbath of the Lord wantonly polluted; the diadem of Jesus trampled in the dust; the blood of the covenant counted an unholy thing; and "not more than one sixth of its entire population regularly attending public worship."* In proof of its corruption, we might refer not only to its numerous thieves and crowded prisons, but to its saloons, its theatres, its gambling-houses, its tea-gardens, its gin-palaces, and its other schools of vice,

* Jethro, page 23.

in which crime is applauded, modesty outraged, moral principle weakened or destroyed, and thousands taught most effectually to forget God. The statistics of crime in this great city are truly appalling. It is stated, on what is deemed good authority,* that there are within its precincts not fewer than eighty thousand females living upon the wages of their iniquity, supported at an expense of eight millions annually, or something more than twenty thousand pounds per day; and that one out of every three of the daughters of persons in the humble walks of life is found to associate with those outcasts of society, before she has attained the age of twenty years.† It is also computed that three millions annually are expended in the article of gin alone, chiefly by the lower orders, many of whom are thus prepared for the perpetration of the foulest deeds. Now this is London! Christian London! the Jerusalem of the Christian world! Nor is this renowned city to be regarded as an exception in its morals to the generality of towns and cities of Christendom; for I have no doubt that, on close examination, it would be found that, in proportion to their population, many

* Great Metropolis. † Ibid.

other places are as deeply sunk in crime as our great metropolis. Nor are these the only evidences that Christendom needs a spiritual renovation; for its palaces, its courts, its colleges, and its various institutions, bear ample testimony to the same affecting truth. Not only so, but if we look at its politics, we shall perceive thrones established in unrighteousness, and upheld by despotic power; Governments that would exclude from all participation in their councils that Being "by whom Kings reign and Princes decree justice;" and systems of policy calculated to foster corruption and encourage practices of vice. If we examine its literature, we shall find that much of it is the product of intellects untutored by the grace of God, and so adapted to the taste of degenerate nature, as to produce a more complete estrangement of the mind from God. And in many of our theological works the great truths of the Gospel, which are to save the world, are either entirely frittered away, or thrown into the back-ground, and the peculiarities of a sect are allowed to occupy the most prominent place in the picture. If we investigate its commerce, we shall at once find that its principles are, in many respects, opposed to our Lord's rule of equity, inasmuch

as they encourage men to speculate without capital, to make gain of the ignorance and necessities of their fellow-creatures, and, certainly, in buying and selling, to do unto others not as they would have others do unto them. Against these evils has the Lord lifted up his warning voice, denouncing them in the strongest terms; and who can hear that voice without alarm? Wrath is undoubtedly merited; and what, I ask, but a change effected by *multiplied* conversions can save us from becoming as Admah, and being made like unto Zeboim? Our sins are numerous and aggravated; and as their cry must reach to heaven, if the Lord remember not mercy, the largest portion of the inhabitants of Christendom must assuredly perish.

But is not the conversion of the world a mere chimerical object, and every effort employed for its accomplishment dictated by ignorance and fanaticism? Certainly not. It is true that it presents difficulties to overcome, but they are not insurmountable; strongholds to storm, but they are not impregnable; giants to combat, but they cannot stand before the Lord of Hosts; and walls of fortification reaching to the very heavens, but they shall tremble at the sound of the trumpet, and fall before the ark of the Lord.

The atonement of Christ leads us to expect the conversion of the world. It has made ample provision for it. The Scriptures on this point are full and unequivocal. Isaiah informs us that "all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Not the iniquity of a few merely, but the iniquity of *all those who like sheep have gone astray, and turned to their own way;* consequently the iniquity of all the human family, this being their manifest character as fallen creatures. The Apostle Paul is equally explicit: he tells us that God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all;" that "Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again;" and that "He by the grace of God tasted death for every man." The beloved John supports the same delightful truth; telling us that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." He thus addressed himself to Christians generally, and thereby intimated that if at any time they should be overcome

by the tempter, they were not to yield to despondency, but to remember their Advocate with the Father, who was a propitiation for sins thus committed; and not for such sins merely, but for all sins; not for the sins of the church only, but for the sins of the whole world. These passages of Scripture, and others of similar import, clearly and fully assert the universal character of the atonement; and this doctrine is corroborated by that of a general resurrection. That there will be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust, is a matter of revelation, and is distinctly stated to be the result of the Saviour's mediation; for "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." If redemption thus extends to the bodies of all, the legitimate conclusion forced upon us is, that it has made provision for the souls of all; as it appears, in my humble opinion, inconsistent with either the justice or mercy of God, that he should redeem the bodies of any of our race without redeeming their souls also, as that would render their anguish more intolerable in that place of misery which it was impossible for them to escape. Now my argument is this: As the atonement is universal, a foundation is laid for such a work of grace, as shall put down every form

of superstition and error, and bring under its saving influence all the tribes of men.

The character of Christianity leads us to expect the conversion of the world. If we examine its construction and frame, its spirit and tendency, and its independence both with respect to civil policy and ecclesiastical regimen, we shall at once perceive its adaptation for universal diffusion, and its competency to bring all nations under its salutary influence. Christianity not only commands its recipients to diffuse it throughout the world, and excites them to do so, but it is suited to all grades of intellect, and to every station and rank of society; and will not have fully carried out its aggressive principles, nor completely developed its spirit of benevolent enterprise, until it has explored every continent of the earth, blessed every island of the sea, deposed every idol from its throne, regenerated every pagan heart, gathered unto Shiloh every Jewish wanderer, wrested every trophy from the "Arab thief," and entirely reclaimed our apostate and rebellious race. Its benevolence is as deep as depravity, and as wide as the world. For the salvation of souls it exerts its energies, and lifts up its importunate voice, crying "Give! give!" nor will it ever say it has

enough, until it has embraced the whole human family, and regenerated the heart of every man.

The intimations of divine Providence lead us to expect the world's conversion. Every man who has acquainted himself with the world's history during the last forty years, must know that in that period it has undergone a considerable change very favourable to the conversion of the whole race of man. The laudable efforts of the British and Foreign Bible Society have succeeded in rousing the nations, and exciting amongst them a spirit of inquiry relative to religious truth. The Eastern churches are awaking from their slumbers, and crying to those of the West, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." The most intelligent amongst the heathen tribes are manifestly perplexed and disgusted with the principles and rites of paganism. Copies of the holy Scriptures are nearly every where anxiously desired, and eagerly perused; and heart-thrilling voices from almost every part of the unchristianized world, imploring spiritual help, are reiterated in the ears of the directors of Missionary Societies. Thus are the fields white unto the harvest; and although much toil and opposition may await the reapers, yet these things are signs of

the times not to be mistaken, and which indicate God's gracious designs relative to the revival and extension of pure religion throughout all the earth. Nor should we forget the standing of the British nation in the world. Without intending any reflection upon other nations, I feel all the confidence which truth inspires, in saying that she exerts a paramount influence amongst the nations of the earth. Connected with her influence are her extensive possessions. She has planted her colonies in every quarter of the globe; and some millions of the Heathen are under the control of her salutary sceptre. Her banners are waving in the breezes of every zone; and the sun is ever gilding some portion of her dominions. Her canvass is swelling on every sea; and her manufactures are sold in every market. Her name is a shield of protection in almost every land; and her influence affords access to nearly all the tribes of men. Blind indeed must be that man who does not behold in these things the operations of a gracious Providence, which intends Great Britain to take a leading part in building the walls of Zion. With her is pre-eminently deposited the Gospel of Christ, and these things mark her out as a chosen instrument to take the most active

part in its diffusion. Like the angel in the Apocalypse, which John beheld flying in the midst of heaven, she has the everlasting Gospel to preach to every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue. And it is this, rather than the excellency of her constitution, the wealth of her nobles, the wisdom of her statesmen, the valour of her army, and the prowess of her navy, that gives her such influence and dominion in the world. Britain is to be heaven's almoner; and Providence thus opens the way amongst the nations for the distribution of heaven's bounty,—that wherever British influence is felt, British Christianity in its purest form may also be enjoyed.

The success which has already attended legitimate and well-directed efforts, encourages us to expect the conversion of the world. The Gospel is the divinely appointed instrument of salvation; and wherever it has been faithfully made known, it has never failed to meet the case of its sincere recipients, whatever may have been the culture of their minds, the strength of their prejudices, the enormity of their sins, the depth of their degradation, or the peculiarities of their customs and creeds. It has met and overcome every form of opposition, and gained its trophies in all grades of

society and amongst all classes of men. Atheists, Deists, Socinians, Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, princes, peasants, bondmen, freemen, philosophers, barbarians, and in fact individuals of all nations, conditions, and crimes, have felt it to be the power of God unto salvation. We are thus furnished with specimens of what the Gospel can do; and if but one in each of the classes of persons mentioned, has been converted, in every such convert we have received an assurance that the conversion of the whole is practicable. Nay more, we have received in these converts the first-fruits of the world's harvest; and as a sheaf of many golden ears, the church may wave them before the Lord, and regard them as an earnest that the whole harvest will in due time be gathered in. It is true that the Gospel may not have triumphed extensively in many of the dark nations of the earth; yet in every one has it obtained at least a burial-place for its faithful dead, which, like the cave of Machpelah, we receive as a pledge that its glorious Author is to inherit all kingdoms, and that "men are to be blessed in him, and all nations call him blessed."

The plain declarations of Scripture lead us to expect the conversion of the world. For instance: Is the kingdom of Christ compared to

"a stone cut out of the mountain without hands?" That stone is to break in pieces every opposing power, and "fill the whole earth." Is it said to resemble leaven? That leaven is to diffuse itself until every part shall be brought under its influence. Is Christ said to be the seed of Abraham? In that seed "all the families of the earth are to be blessed." Is he the King of Zion? He is to "speak peace to the Heathen; and his dominion is to be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Is he the King of kings and Lord of lords? "All kings are to fall before him, and all nations are to worship him." Is he the Son of God? The Father has promised to give him "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Has he received a name which is above every name? "Unto the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, of things in earth, and of things under the earth, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Is it life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea;" and "all shall know Him from the least unto

the greatest." Such are the statements of Scripture on the interesting subject of the world's conversion, and which in due time will receive their accomplishment.

CHAPTER II.

HAVING in the preceding chapter established, as I believe, the necessity and practicability of the scriptural conversion of the world, I shall now show by what agency that important work is to be effected.

It appears to be a principle in the divine administration, for God to accomplish what man cannot accomplish, but not to perform what man can perform. See this principle exemplified in nature. God does not cultivate the soil, or deposit the seed therein, because man can do that; but he gives the fruit of the earth in all its variety and richness, and thus effects what man cannot effect. See this exemplified in the miracles of our Lord. Take his raising Lazarus for an example. When he had come to the tomb of his servant, he directed his attendants to roll away the stone; and when he had restored his friend to life, he

farther instructed them to loose him, and let him go. Now he that raised Lazarus from the dead could have easily rolled away the stone, and loosed his servant from his bands; but these were things which man could do; and our Lord, on that deeply interesting occasion, absolutely performed nothing but what man could not perform. Now this appears to be the principle upon which he acts in the conversion of men. It is true that we cannot of ourselves do any good thing, much less convert sinners from the error of their ways; yet we can, in humble dependence upon spiritual aid, employ the means which God has appointed for that important end: and we have no more authority to expect that the Lord will convert sinners whilst those means are neglected, than the husbandman has authority to expect a plentiful harvest, whilst he neglects to cultivate his land and sow his seed.

The truth of God presented to the mind is the great instrument of conversion; and it does not appear that a sinner can be converted and saved independently of the influence of that truth. For instance: Are men born again? It is "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; even the word of the Lord which liveth and abideth for ever." Are they sanctified? It is "through

the truth." Are they made clean? It is "through the words which Christ speaks unto them." "The word of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Hence the absolute necessity of teaching, and consequently of human agency, in the conversion of the world. If ever there had been a period when that agency was unnecessary, it must have been on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended upon the disciples. But even then it was not dispensed with in the conversion of the three thousand souls, who on that memorable occasion were added to the Lord. They had mockingly witnessed the effects of the Spirit's manifestation, and were not pricked in their hearts until they heard Gospel truth from the lips of Peter. *Then*, and not till then, did they discover their sin and danger, and exclaim, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Nor can we find a conversion to God after that period on record in the New Testament, in which human agency of some description was not employed. Was the Ethiopian eunuch converted? The Spirit directed Philip "to preach unto him Jesus," that he might "understand what he was reading;" and the eunuch "believed with all his heart," was baptized, and "went on his way rejoicing." Was Saul of Tarsus con-

verted? Ananias was commanded to go into the street which was called "Straight," and in the house of one Judas, to put his hands upon him that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Were Cornelius and his household converted? Peter was instructed in a vision to go down to Cesarea to tell them words whereby they might be saved; and whilst he yet spake the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. Now in each of these cases of conversion the Divine Being had nearly effected the work himself independently of human agency; but he did not complete it without employing that agency; as if he intended thereby to teach his church through all generations that it is his rule to bless man by man, and frequently to choose the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

In speaking of human agents in the conversion of the world, I refer not only to the ambassadors of Christ, but to all Christians, whatever be their attainments in knowledge, rank in society, or station in the church. It is true that private Christians are not to invade the rights of the pastoral office: but they ought, according to their respective abilities and stations of life, to teach transgressors

the ways of the Lord, that sinners may be converted unto him; and thus, as "helpers to the truth," co-operate with their respective Pastors in the establishment and extension of the Saviour's kingdom. Such are the views entertained by the highly esteemed and devoted Bishop of Chester, who, in a recent Charge to the Clergy of his diocess, says: "My brethren, if we shut out from spiritual usefulness all who are not ordained to spiritual things,—if we do not rather excite and urge them to such duties, we contradict the plain commands of our religion. The Scriptures enjoin all Christians to 'exhort one another daily while it is called to-day;' to 'edify one another;' to 'speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs;' to 'warn the unruly;' to 'comfort the feeble-minded;' to 'assemble themselves together that they may provoke unto good works;' to 'visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.' So speaks the Word of God. And is man wiser than God? Is man to see danger where God prescribes duty? to forbid when God commands? Thus Satan would have it; for thus is his kingdom maintained; thus is darkness perpetuated; and religion, instead of being an active principle, becomes a superstitious notion. But we protest

againt such error as the worst remaining relic of Papal usurpation, bred and nourished, not in the times of pure Christianity, but in the dark ages of its corruption, when they chose to keep the key of knowledge themselves, who are afraid to trust the people with it; and allowed the Priest's lips alone to speak, that he alone might enjoy the power which belongs to knowledge. Never, *never, brethren*, shall we be a Christian community till this error is dispelled; till it is with us as it was with those who were first called Christians. When every one who has the knowledge of God in his own heart believes it his duty to bring to the same knowledge the individual with whom he is connected,—his child, his servant, his dependant, his labourer, his neighbour,—*then*, and not before, may the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." Few persons, comparatively, are called to the office of the ministry, upon which no man should enter without a divine call; but all Christians are called upon to labour to save souls from death, and to seek by all legitimate means the conversion of the world.

True religion gives a man a moral fitness for teaching it to others. He may have but one talent, and be totally destitute of literary

attainments; he may have neither wealth nor influence to recommend him; and yet if he have the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, he is morally fitted for the work of teaching others. It is true, he may not be able to declare the whole counsel of God, as that requires much knowledge and research; but a sinner's conversion does not depend upon his knowing more than a few of the first principles of divine truth. He must know that he is a guilty and depraved creature; that the Son of God died to save him; and that if he yield to the Spirit's influence, repent of his sins, and believe in Jesus, God will save his soul; but if not, he will be eternally lost. Nothing more need be taught him to effect his conversion: for these are the great truths which the Holy Ghost employs in awakening the conscience, and in bringing men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Now surely every converted man can teach these truths to his neighbour. He has felt their influence upon his own mind, and is therefore qualified to teach them to others, with greater efficiency than a mere theorist is capable of doing, whatever may be the culture of his mind, or the grasp of his intellectual

faculties. He can teach the nature of true repentance, because he has experienced it; the character of justifying faith, because he exercises it; and the advantage of religion, because he happily enjoys it. Besides, he "loves his brother," and is thus prepared not only to treat him with Christian courtesy and kindness, but to seek his salvation with anxious solicitude and unwearied perseverance.

But religion not only qualifies Christians for this important work, by giving them knowledge, love, and meekness, but inspires them with a sincere desire to be so employed. For the truth of this I might refer to Andrew, who, on finding the Messiah, hastened home to bring his brother Simon. I might refer to Saul of Tarsus, who, on obtaining salvation, immediately went forth to recommend it to his countrymen. I might refer to the martyrs and confessors, whose hearts so ardently desired the conversion of their persecutors, that they were manifestly more concerned for that than for their own safety. I might refer to the truly pious, in every age of the world, who have wept, and prayed, and laboured, in various ways, to effect the conversion of sinners. But, reader, if you have ever been truly converted to God, I need not go farther than yourself for a

witness of this truth. When you first felt the Saviour's love shed abroad in your heart, how did you feel respecting the unsaved? Did you not earnestly desire their conversion? You did; and if you obeyed the impulse of your new nature, you strove to effect that conversion. I appeal to your conscience for the truth of this statement. Nor was this feeling intended to resemble the mountain torrent, which soon exhausts itself, but the steady flowing stream, deepening and widening in its course. If you have lost this feeling, you cannot have retained your religion, it being inseparably connected therewith; for he that loveth God must love his brother also, and cannot but earnestly desire his conversion, and labour to promote it. If such be the tendency of religion,—if it excites an ardent desire for the conversion of sinners, and invests its recipients with moral capabilities to labour for the accomplishment of that object, what is the fair and legitimate conclusion forced upon us, but that they ought to be so employed? If they are not, they prove unfaithful to their principles, hide their talents in the earth, resist the Spirit's influence, and thereby greatly endanger their own safety. I believe that unfaithfulness in this matter is the most fruitful source of backsliding

in the church of God. Influenced by the fear of reproach, or by the example of some old lukewarm professors, many new converts oppose the bias and tendency of their renewed spirits, and a low state of spirituality, or total apostasy, follows as a very natural result. I conceive that watchfulness and prayer are not more intimately connected with the spiritual prosperity of believers than is the faithful employment of their talents in the conversion of the world.

The commands of Scripture on this important Christian duty are sufficiently clear and imperative. They require God's people not only to pray for all men, but to make known in some way, and to the extent of which they are capable, the vital doctrines of the Gospel to those persons whose conversion they desire, and thus to furnish that divinely appointed instrument by which the Holy Ghost awakens, converts, and saves. For this purpose they are directed to teach the words of the law "diligently to their children, and to talk of them when they sit in the house, and when they walk by the way; when they lie down, and when they rise up." They are "in any wise to rebuke their neighbour, and not suffer sin upon their brother." They are to

"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." They are "to do and teach the commands of God, that they may be called great in the kingdom of heaven;" and to "teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord;" and, in fact, to be "teachers of all good things." This was the practice of the primitive church. We are told in the Acts of the Apostles, that "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." "This is the relation of a most wonderful event. It merits more attention than it has yet obtained from any of the commentators. The fact is soon stated: on examination, however, it will appear to have been an occurrence to which there is nothing at all equal or parallel since the foundation of the world. The whole church were scattered abroad, 'except the Apostles.' Of how many did this church consist? Some

conception may be formed of their number from a glance at their history. For wise and beneficent ends, it has pleased the Spirit of all grace to construct this part of the narrative somewhat remarkably. We have a reiterated statement of numbers, and other expressions respecting augmentation, from which a tolerably correct idea may be formed of the multitudes who were thus scattered abroad, for the general and simultaneous illumination of Judea, and Samaria, and the regions round about." The first intimation presents us with a list of disciples comprising "one hundred and twenty;" the second announces an addition of "about three thousand" in one day; the third, that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved;" the fourth, that "the number of men was about five thousand;" the fifth, that "the number of the disciples was multiplied;" and the sixth, that "the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the Priests were obedient to the faith." "Now considering the peculiarly chastened character of this history, and the utter absence of all exaggeration in the language of its statements, it really seems to us a moderate estimate, when we

take the male disciples at from ten to fifteen thousand, and the female and youth at a much larger number. This great multitude went every where preaching the word."* No wonder that Christianity so rapidly spread during the apostolic age. The inspired historian informs us of the success which attended the labours of some of those scattered disciples. They "travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great multitude believed and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch; who, when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." These "men of Cyprus and Cyrene" were not Apostles, nor outwardly called to preach, but they were persecuted laymen; and Barnabas, on coming to

* Jethro, p. 347.

Antioch, did not censure their conduct for speaking in the name of Jesus, neither did he describe it as being an irregularity; but he rejoiced on witnessing their success, and laboured to give stability and permanency to the good work they had been the means of promoting.*—"Having ascertained the true state of the case, in the days of the Apostles, it is of comparatively small importance what views were entertained in after-times. It may, however, serve to confirm the views which we entertain of apostolic practices, if we find the same order of things prevailing in the ages that succeeded them; and that such is the fact, may be clearly shown from the writings of the first three centuries. The order of things which prevailed in the days of the Apostles was still plainly discoverable at the close of the second century; and in the fourth century, Hilary, a deacon among the Romans, a man of learning and discernment, in an Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, declares that, 'after churches were established in all places, and officers appointed, things were conducted in a

* It is very evident that the Oxford Tract Divines are not, as respects their spirit and practice, in the *Barnabasian* succession.

different manner from that in which they commenced; for at first *all taught.*'"*

But however important, and indeed essential, human agency may be in the conversion of the world, it will be totally inefficient independently of divine agency; for "without me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." Are dark minds to be illuminated to discover and rightly apprehend divine truth? Illumination is from the Lord: for "what man knoweth the things of man save the spirit of man which is in him? Neither knoweth any man the things of God, but the Spirit of God." Are the wicked to be convinced of sin, and be made the partakers of true repentance? Repentance, too, is from the Lord: for Christ is "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel;" and "God granteth repentance unto the Gentiles." Are sincere penitents to be led to the foot of the cross, where, in the exercise of simple faith, they are to obtain the forgiveness of sin? Forgiveness also is from the Lord: "for it is God who justifies," and who "abundantly pardons." Are believers to be greatly strengthened, and made the partakers of entire sanctification? Entire sanctification likewise is from the Lord:

* Jethro, p. 348.

for, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; and from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you, saith the Lord." Are numerous and formidable difficulties to be overcome? They are not to be overcome "by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And if we examine the means to be employed in the world's conversion, we shall discover that it is God in those means that must render them efficient. Is the Gospel to be preached to every creature? "Neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." Is earnest prayer, without ceasing, to be offered at the throne of grace for the salvation of our species? "It is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." Is divine truth to be presented to the mind under various forms and in different ways? "It is the Spirit" in that truth "which quickeneth and giveth life."

This vital principle in the conversion of the world was fully developed on the day of pentecost, and in every subsequent revival of religion, if we may so speak, with which the apostolic

age was blessed. In those revivals pagan temples were deserted, heathen oracles were silenced, ancient prejudices were uprooted, vicious habits were forsaken, the religion of every state was enfeebled, and unnumbered multitudes embraced the faith of the crucified Redeemer. And by what agency was this extensive revolution effected? The Apostles chiefly were the visible agents employed in promoting it. And what potency did they possess to effect so great a change? It was not their wealth: for "silver and gold had they none." It was not their rank and influence in society: for they were not only of the peasantry of Judea, but despised Galileans. It was not their eloquence or learning: for they were without excellency of speech, and, with the exception of Paul, they were illiterate men. It was not their popular doctrine: for the doctrine which they taught was the most unpalatable to the carnal mind that could have been inculcated, and much calculated to rouse opposition; sweeping away, as it did, the very foundations upon which many were reposing their hopes of future happiness, and boldly assailing the pleasures, the practices, the principles, the institutions, the creeds, and the religion of the people to whom they ministered;

and in fact seeking, without offering any worldly recompence, to new-model the whole of society. How then is their success to be accounted for? The inspired writers tell us that an invisible agency was at work,—that "the hand of the Lord was with them,"—that they "were workers together with God,"—and that "they went forth preaching every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." If it be denied that God was with the Apostles, we cannot on any known principle whatever account for their success.

Divine agency in the promotion of conversions is as necessary now as it was in the days of the Apostles. The blindness of the human understanding is the same; the perverseness of the will is the same; the alienation of the mind is the same; the enmity of the heart is the same; the pollution of the imagination is the same; the opposition of the devil is the same; nor has any change taken place in the nature of religion, or in the terms upon which it is to be received and enjoyed. It is true that Christians may now have their splendid sanctuaries, their liturgical services, their pealing organs, their eloquent Ministers, their endowed colleges, their theological in-

stitutions, their Bible associations, their Missionary societies, and a beautifully organized instrumentality operating under a variety of forms and modifications for the diffusion of religious knowledge and the extension of the Saviour's kingdom; yet they can no more do without God, than could the fishermen of Galilee when they went forth without either "*scrip or purse*" to overthrow every form of superstition and error, and revolutionize the whole world. This sentiment must be deeply impressed upon the minds of all who attempt to promote the conversion of sinners, and direct them in all their movements; or they will labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought. It is true they may excite, but it will be but the excitement of animal feeling; they may draw tears from those to whom they speak, but they will be but the tears of human sympathy; and they may even occasion a noise, but it will not be the sobbings of broken and contrite hearts at the foot of the cross, or the bursting joy of victorious faith as it takes hold of the covenant of God, and triumphantly tramples upon the world, the flesh, and the devil. Never should it, therefore, be forgotten that all the good which is done upon the earth, it is the Lord that doeth

it; and that means for the conversion of the world, however diligently used, and well adapted for the accomplishment of that important end, will be totally insufficient without the divine blessing.

CHAPTER III.

If it be God's plan to convert the world by human agency, we need no new revelation from heaven to inform us why it is not converted; for there are hinderances on the part of his church, to whom he has assigned this work, which sufficiently account for that; and until these are removed, the world will still, I fear, lie in the wicked one. The Lord has enjoined it upon his church to disciple all mankind; but that duty it will never perform until its members have more religion. Its piety in the present day is very defective. If we pass by all Papists, and those who attend a place of worship without any desire to glorify God, and confine our attention to such only as give or receive the pledge of membership, and participate in all the ordinances of the Christian sanctuary, we shall find amongst them, limited

as may be their number, principles and tempers in various degrees of developement, clearly indicating the defective character of their piety, and which cannot but greatly retard the conversion of the world.

When Isaiah foretold the glory of the latter day, he called upon the church to remove certain obstacles which were opposed to the revelation of that glory. His language is, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." In this prediction, Isaiah not only foretold the advent of Christ, but that delightful period when his holy religion shall fill the whole earth; and intimated that there were valleys to be exalted, mountains and hills to be brought low, crooked places to be made straight, and rough places to be made smooth; or in other words, certain obstacles to the work of the Lord to be removed, before that glorious period could be realized. And if we look into the church, we shall perceive

many such obstacles; for whatever is found therein opposed to the spread of true religion, is an obstacle to the conversion of the world.

A defective exhibition of divine truth is one of those obstacles. The word of God is the great instrument employed by the Holy Ghost in the salvation of souls; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:" and although a very limited portion of divine truth, when accompanied by the Spirit's influence, may lead to conviction and salvation, yet as "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness," I conceive that a faithful exhibition of its various doctrines, duties, promises, and threatenings, is essential to an extensive and permanent work of grace. Nor are the truths of God's word to be exhibited merely, but presented to the mind with judgment and fidelity, and made more or less prominent according to their relative importance. Consequently that ministry is defective which gives not prominence to the Atonement as the foundation of the sinner's hope, and source of every spiritual blessing: that ministry is defective which deals in mere general

statements, and does not discriminate character, or detect and assail vice, under all its forms and modifications: that ministry is defective which is abstruse and metaphysical; for although it may be what is called intellectual preaching, it seldom affects the heart, and few, comparatively, can understand it: that ministry is defective which is not applicatory, and deals not closely with the conscience; for although it may be both orthodox and eloquent, yet being without point, it is not that new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth, by which the mountains are to be beaten small, and the hills made as chaff: that ministy is defective which offers not a present salvation, and urges not upon the hearers an immediate acceptance of it; for persons sitting under such a ministry are likely to trifle with their souls, and postpone the great business of life until a more convenient season: that ministry is defective which is exercised as an *end*, instead of a *measure* to accomplish an end, or which is not solely exercised with the view of saving souls and bringing glory to God: and that ministry is defective which honours not the Holy Ghost as the Agent in man's salvation, and confides not in him for assistance and success. Now wherever there are such defects in the minis-

trations of the sanctuary, formidable barriers to the conversion of the world undoubtedly exist, and should be removed, that the way of the Lord may be prepared for the revelation of his glory.

The inconsistency of Ministers is also an obstacle to the conversion of the world. Persons sustaining the high and important office of the Christian ministry, should be men of blameless character and of deep piety; for independently of this, they cannot possess that zeal for the Redeemer, that love for souls, that power with God, that unction of the Holy One, so essential to the success of their undertaking. It is not enough that the truths of the Gospel be presented to the mind with clearness and fidelity; but this should also be done with an earnestness of spirit and manner becoming their importance; and enforced by a consistent walk and conversation, as this will prove more effective than the loftiest strains of unhallowed oratory, or the soundest deductions of the profoundest erudition. A Minister may be richly decorated with all the ornaments of human and divine literature, but will still be a despicable creature, of no authority or service in the church of God, but a hinderance to the Gospel, if he be not also clothed with right-

eousness, and adorned with the lovely graces of the Spirit. If men, therefore, enter into the solemn office of the sanctuary with no conviction of duty, or love to souls, but for the purpose of displaying their talents, or to procure a morsel of bread; or if it should be apparent by the character of their preaching, or their spirit and conduct out of the pulpit, that they aim at some other object than the glory of God in the salvation of men; they cannot but greatly impede the progress of the Gospel, as their inconsistency will prevent them from being "accounted of as the Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." The fact is, if the ambassadors of the Gospel would prepare the way of the Lord, they must be humble, self-denying, watchful, zealous, prudent, heavenly-minded, and deeply devoted Christians; always about their proper work, and in all their intercourse with society seeking the salvation of souls. The character and importance of the work to which they are solemnly pledged, and the influence connected with the ministerial office, require their maintenance of this conduct. But if, instead of their doing so, they should be intemperate politicians, or violent partisans; if they should excite the spirit of levity by pitiful witticisms or ludicrous anec-

dotes, and encourage vain, foolish, and trifling conversation; if they should depreciate the talents, services, and characters of other Ministers, or hold them up to ridicule, and thereby prevent their usefulness; if they should sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag, by coveting human applause, and seeking in their intercourse with their people to be complimented, rather than to promote the glory of God; or if they should so far forget themselves as to evince a haughty, irritable, peevish, fretful, or vindictive spirit, instead of the gentleness of Christ, they cannot but greatly oppose and injure the work of the Lord. When the Priests under the former dispensation made themselves "contemptible and base before the people," we are told that they "caused many to stumble at the law;" and there can be no doubt but inconsistency in Ministers of the Gospel will render them contemptible also, and lead to a similar result. No very extensive triumph of divine truth can be reasonably expected, unless Ministers take an elevated stand in society, and by a meek but inflexible piety oppose every form of vice that may present itself before them. "May the Lord purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that

they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness!"

Hypocrisy in the church is likewise an obstacle to the world's conversion. God requires truth in the inward parts. His word enjoins sincerity in all things, and denounces in the strongest terms every species of deception and guile. There was much hypocrisy in the Jewish church, and it is greatly to be feared that many are under its influence in the Christian church. Such persons appear in false forms, and mimic characters and virtues not belonging to them: their religion is mere acting, and their service therein nothing better than masquerading. They may frequently, and even ardently, engage in public prayer; but they draw nigh unto God with their lips only. They may in appropriate language, and with becoming demeanour, confess their sins before the mercy-seat; but they feel no contrition of heart. They may intercede for a perishing world, and profess much love for souls; but they will make no sacrifice to promote their salvation. They may enumerate the blessings of which they are partakers, and thank the Lord for his loving-kindness; but their bosoms heave not with grateful emotion to the benevolent Author of all their benefits. They may

profess faith in Christ, and to be accepted in the Beloved; but they live under the influence of known vice, and make no struggle against it. They may say they love their brother, and would do any thing to serve him; but they injure his character by retailing misrepresentation and slander. They may declare the deep interest they feel in religious charities, and even contribute to their support; but it is to obtain human applause, as they would not do the same thing were they fully persuaded that none but God would ever know of it. They may avow their experimental acquaintance with the deep things of God, and declare themselves to be entirely sanctified; but they still yield to the influence of impure motives, and are often governed by unholy tempers. That many such instances of hypocrisy are found in the Christian church, is a fact that will not be denied; and they certainly form a powerful barrier to the progress of piety, and of course to the conversion of the world. No class of sinners were so severely reproved by our Lord as hypocrites, whom he invariably represented as powerful obstacles to his glorious cause; for they "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: not going in themselves, neither suffering them that were entering to go in."

When hypocrisy was in the camp of Israel, the Lord refused to go with his host to battle, and hence they were defeated, and the proud foe exultingly triumphed over the fallen sons of Israel; and there can be no doubt but the people of God in the present day are often made to flee before the enemy, because of the hypocrisy which exists amongst his professed followers. Men should be sincere: do the things which God commands, or cease to say, "Lord, Lord!" get oil in their vessels, or cast away their lamps; be Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile, or immediately leave Jehovah's camp; fight the good fight of faith, or put off the Christian uniform. Hypocrisy in the church is a more powerful obstacle to the spread of religion than infidelity in the world: the one is a treacherous foe within the citadel, the other an open foe without; and I have no doubt that hypocrisy has done more than infidelity in corrupting the church and impeding the progress of piety in the world.

Worldly conformity amongst professors of religion is another obstacle to the conversion of the world. The church is to be distinct from the world. "Ye are not of the world," says Christ; "for I have called you out of the world:" and St. Paul exhorts Christians "not to be con-

formed to this world, but to be transformed." But, do religious professors generally act upon this advice? I fear not. For where do you see it attended to? It is not in their *apparel;* for with the exception of the "Friends" and a few others, there is no perceptible difference in that respect between the professing church and the ungodly world. It is not in their *mode of doing business;* for, like the men of the world, they will ask one price for an article and take another, make engagements and not perform them, and contract debts without any rational prospect of paying them. It is not in their *politics;* for in using their elective franchise they do not look out for men of piety, but persons of their own political creed, and will sometimes support the most irreligious characters in opposition to pious candidates whose political views do not entirely accord with their own. It is not in their *parties;* for if they do not indulge in dancing, or in a game at cards, the luxury, the levity, the gossip, and the slander of the world not unfrequently mark such convivial assemblies. It is not in their *conversation;* for although they may neither swear nor blaspheme, yet, like the men of the world, they appear most at home when the markets, or politics, or the weather, or their neighbours

form the topic of their conversation. In these statements I have of course spoken generally: there are, thank God, many exceptions; but generally speaking there is much criminal conformity to the world amongst religious professors in these and in other things which might be mentioned. Now as the professors of godliness are looked to for an example, and as they are to be the witnesses of Christ to an unbelieving world, such worldly conformity gives a false testimony on the important subject of religion, likely to influence many to their hurt, and is therefore to be regarded as a powerful barrier to the spread of true religion. Christians should dare to be singular; cease their attempts to reconcile Christ and Belial; meekly but boldly confess Christ before men, and go unto him without the camp bearing the reproach. If they conform to the world, it may not only embolden the wicked in their wickedness, but "destroy him for whom Christ died," and cause "a weak brother to perish." Most resolutely therefore should they place themselves, both by their example and their testimony, for Christ, in opposition to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life," and every form of corruption in whatever character or garb it may appear before them: so

shall they make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Disunion amongst Christians is an obstacle to the conversion of the world. Christians are to be *one;* and not merely in their belief in the great truths of the Gospel, but in affection; for they are to be of one heart striving together for the hope of the Gospel. This, according to our Lord, is a mark of genuine discipleship; for "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another:" and according to St. John, it is an evidence of spiritual quickening; for "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." But is this the character of the Christian church generally? I fear not. For whence come the envyings, and strifes, and censoriousness, and evil speakings, and bitter controversies amongst the different religious denominations? Undoubtedly from the spirit of disunion, the want of brotherly affection. And to the same evil source may be traced the various schisms in the church, which are of so frequent occurrence, and attended with so much asperity and unholy strife. Whilst such a state of things exists, no very extensive revival of religion can be expected, as the way of the Lord is not prepared. The Saviour in his

admirable prayer intimates that Christian union is essential to the conversion of the world. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The disciples were together with one accord, of one heart and of one mind, when the Holy Ghost came upon them on the day of pentecost, and converted about three thousand souls; and so long as they maintained this spirit, the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great multitude believed and turned unto the Lord; but no sooner did they yield to unsanctified tempers, and suffer "envyings, strifes, and divisions," than their moral power was perceptibly weakened, and the progress of the Gospel greatly retarded. Christian professors should do all in their power to preserve the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and not only with their own denomination, but with others also that hold the Head, but in a few subordinate things agree not with them. They should cultivate that "charity which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself

unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and which thinketh no evil." They should put the best construction upon every thing they see or hear of their brethren, and be willing to make any sacrifice which does not imply the compromise of principle, rather than sow the seeds of discord amongst them, or give the occasion of offence even to a weak brother. In thus making the crooked straight and the rough places plain, they would prepare the way for the world's conversion.

Covetousness amongst the professed disciples of Jesus is an obstacle to the conversion of the world. The law of love under which they are placed, requires that their benevolence in the cause of Christ be commensurate with their means; but it certainly is not so: for it is believed that they possess a surplus treasure, which, if so appropriated, would enable them to fulfil our Lord's command in sending the Gospel to every creature. And yet what exertion and entreaty it requires to extract from them a mere fraction of their wealth for that important object! And small as is the amount thus obtained, I fear it would be greatly reduced, were we to deduct from it every contribution but such only as have been spontaneously offered from the pure, unmixed, and ennobling motive

of love to God and man. A Minister who was greatly opposed to the present mode of collecting in places of worship, as being in his estimation calculated to encourage unworthy motives to give, resolved to dispense with it in his chapel; and after having preached one evening on behalf of a charitable institution, he told his congregation that a box was placed in the lobby for the reception of their offerings, that they might be left to the influence of abstract Christian principles in their contributions on the occasion. The congregation consisted of about two hundred persons; and as I was present during the sermon, I waited with the Minister to ascertain the result; when, lamentable to say, the sum deposited in the box, did not amount to four shillings! Covetousness on the part of the church is doubtless a powerful barrier to the progress of true religion. It was so under the former dispensation; and indeed brought upon God's ancient people a fearful malediction: "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour

you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." In this passage of Scripture God tells his people the cause of their spiritual barrenness, and promises to shower his blessings most copiously upon them if they would remove that cause, by rendering to the Lord that property which he justly claimed, and which they had most unrighteously withheld from his service: and there can be no doubt that covetousness on the part of the Christian church is one principal cause of the low state of religion therein at the present period, and consequently one of the most powerful obstacles to the glorious triumphs of the Gospel of Christ.

Lukewarmness in the church is likewise an obstacle to the conversion of the world. Religious professors are to be zealously affected always in a good thing; and, to be consistent with their principles, they should be more zealous and persevering in the cause of God than in any other cause: but they are not so; for many of them evince much more ardour in striving to procure what they are pleased to call a fortune for their children, than in leading those children to Jesus, whose blessing maketh rich, and whose favour is better than life; and others display far more ardour in returning a

favourite Member to Parliament than in saving a perishing world, as they will make sacrifices of time, of ease, and of property for the one, which they never think of making for the other. Now this want of fervent, practical, and untiring zeal on the part of those who are directed to disciple the world cannot but greatly militate against its conversion. Christians should shake off their lethargy, and press into the service of their divine Master all their capabilities, making the work of the Lord the great business of life, and faithfully acting out its aggressive principles; for until they do so, little hope can be entertained of the universal establishment of the Saviour's kingdom.

Idolizing pulpit-talent by the members of the church is an obstacle to the world's conversion. A talented Minister is certainly very pleasing; and when a man is called of God to proclaim his Gospel, he ought to improve his mind to the very utmost of his opportunities, and labour to be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." A powerful and richly-furnished mind never appears to greater advantage than when preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ: and yet it is not absolutely necessary to a successful ministration of the word; for the

Lord often chooses the "foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and puts "treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of men." But many religious professors appear to lose sight of this; and hence the clamour for what is called talent, which we often hear. We must have a man of talent, say they, or our cause will sink; and they will lacerate the feelings of a laborious, pious, and useful Minister, and even reject him, that they may obtain what they are pleased to designate a man of talent, whose other qualifications for the ministerial office are not superior, if indeed equal, to those of the man rejected. It is to be feared that talent in many cases, rather than God, is sought for in the ministrations of the sanctuary; and that many professed Christians go to the house of the Lord to idolize talent, rather than to worship their Maker. Often are they heard to speak with ecstasy of the beautiful language, well-turned periods, and graceful oratory with which they have been entertained, rather than of the unction they have felt; and instead of glorifying God in their gifted Ministers, they thus present their incense to talent, and consequently receive no spiritual good. The Lord is a jealous God, and will not give his glory

unto another. If therefore the members of the church pay more attention to the messenger than to his message,—to the frail vessel, than to its valuable contents,—they cannot but oppose the work of God; and perhaps this is the chief, if not the only, reason that the ministry of many highly gifted Ministers is comparatively unfruitful in the conversion of souls.

Certain evils in the families of religious professors form a powerful obstacle to the conversion of the world. As I cannot mention all the evils in the domestic circle opposing the work of God, our attention must be directed to the most prominent and injurious of them. Amongst them may be mentioned ungodly marriages. They are positively forbidden; and as the inspired writers distinctly ascribe the deluge, and the Babylonish captivity, to such unholy unions, and as the wrath of God was kindled against the people in the days of Ezra, for having taken strange wives, and was not turned away until they had deeply humbled themselves before him, Christians have nothing to hope, but every thing to fear, from marriages which God prohibits, and upon which he has so frequently impressed the marks of his displeasure. They bring the church and

the world too closely together; and lead to Sabbath parties, and other ungodly associations, which cannot but greatly retard the progress of true religion. Besides, they interfere with many plain acknowledged duties; such as coming out from amongst the wicked, doing every thing in faith, keeping out of the way of temptation, and bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and must consequently operate most injuriously to the cause of the Redeemer.—Inattention to family discipline is another of those evils. Christian families should have an altar to the Triune God, and present thereon the morning and evening sacrifice. Parents should also restrain their children from vice, instil into their minds the principles of true religion, and endeavour by all legitimate means to bring them up in the way they should go. Wherever these duties are neglected, a powerful obstacle is placed in the way of a revival; and whatever exertions such parents may make to bring sinners to God, they cannot scripturally hope for success, whilst in their own families they do not gather up the stumbling-blocks, and prepare the way of the Lord. They may distribute religious tracts, officiate in Sabbath-schools, engage in public prayer-

meetings, and in various ways evince much zeal for the Redeemer's cause, but if they are indifferent about their own immediate relatives, and neglect to command their household after them, their manifest want of consistency cannot but operate against their usefulness, and greatly retard the work of the Lord: for that charity which passeth by a wife, or a child, to embrace a stranger, cannot but be regarded as a spurious affection, of which neither God nor man can approve.—Depreciating Ministers in the family circle is also an evil which should be avoided. The ambassadors of Christ, although not to be idolized, should nevertheless be honoured, and especially in the presence of children: but if, instead of their being so, parents speak of them disrespectfully, and represent them as proud, overbearing, and despotic men; or if, on returning from the sanctuary, they animadvert upon the discourse they have heard, undervalue the abilities of the Preacher, and excite unholy mirth by their facetious remarks respecting him; the probability is, that the conduct of such parents will not only place an insuperable barrier to their children receiving good under the ministry of the man thus held up to contempt, but it will teach them to despise

the ministerial character, and treat with levity the most sacred things, and cannot but greatly hinder the Gospel of Christ. It is worthy of remark that the children of such parents seldom embrace true religion, but many of them become sceptical and dissipated. Now, as the prosperity of the church is greatly affected by what occurs within the family circle of its members, nothing should be allowed therein contrary to the word of God; or it will impede the progress of the world's conversion.

The toleration of gross offences in the Christian church greatly opposes the universal triumphs of the glorious Gospel. It is true that Christianity has not given any code of laws for the government of the church; yet it has laid down certain great principles, as the foundation of that government. One of those principles is, that the immoral, after due admonition, are to be excommunicated, if they repent not. "If any man that is called a brother," saith the Apostle, "be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one you are not to eat." In a religious community where gross offences are tolerated, perhaps because the authors of them are men of wealth

and influence, religious prosperity cannot be expected. The work of God was checked in the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, and their members severely rebuked, because they tolerated within their respective communities persons of immoral character. What the Lord therefore said by his servant to the Corinthian church, on the conduct of one of its members, he says to every church so offending: "Put away from among you that wicked person;" for "what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or he that believeth with an infidel?" We are told that one sinner destroys much good; and if connected with the Christian church, his spirit, conversation, and indeed his whole deportment, cannot but be extensively pernicious, greatly retard the progress of vital godliness therein, and tend to encourage transgressors in their various practices of vice.

The appointment of unconverted men to office in the church, must also be hostile to the world's conversion. No unclean Israelite was permitted to occupy any of the offices of the temple; for all who bore the vessels of the Lord were to be clean; and all the officers of the Christian church, whether they be desig-

nated Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Elders, Preachers, Leaders, or Stewards, are likewise to be clean. They are to be converted, and men of consistent walk and conversation; for independently of this character, they can have no qualifications to legislate for the church, neither can they fulfil the duties of their respective offices, with any rational prospect of increasing its prosperity. Without condemning the principle of a national Establishment, it cannot but be lamented, that the Church of England does not make conversion to God an indispensable qualification for its sacred offices; for every one of them, from that of the humblest Beadle, to that of the highest Archbishop, may be occupied by unconverted men. I do not say they are so occupied; but there is nothing in the discipline of the Church, as understood at the present period, to prevent that from being the case. No very extensive revival of pure religion can be expected within the pale of our national Establishment until this obstacle be removed, and its sacred offices filled by truly converted men, who shall ardently labour for the conversion of souls, and the edification of the body of Christ. Other churches have in part fallen into the same error, and allowed the unclean to officiate

at the altar; and, although the Wesleyan Connexion *imperatively* requires that *all* its offices be filled with persons of piety, it is to be feared that in every instance that rule is not so strictly adhered to as it ought to be. If conversion to God, and consistent piety, should ever be dispensed with in the officers of any church, or regarded as a secondary thing; or if men should be retained in office, either as Ministers, or Deacons, or Leaders, or Stewards, who have lost the life and power of godliness; its glory will soon depart, as God will not work very extensively, if at all, in the conversion of souls, by unholy agents.

Employing ungodly choirs of singers in the church is likewise a barrier to the progress of the Gospel. Singing is a very important part of divine worship. It is either adoration, confession, deprecation, intercession, supplication, or giving of thanks; and should therefore be conducted by pious persons, who "sing with the spirit and with the understanding also." Christians would not think it right for ungodly men to engage in public prayer in the sanctuary of God, but would be greatly shocked with such an impropriety; and yet there would be no more impropriety in that, than for ungodly choirs to lead the singing of public

worship; for in both cases the holy God is to be addressed and worshipped. Far too little attention is paid to this subject in every section of the church; and hence in many of our places of worship when that Being is to be praised before whom angels veil their faces, we have no devotional singing, but a grand performance of sundry conceited, vain, and giddy young people, who praise God with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from him. Their spirit, gestures, and general behaviour, as well as much of their music, would be more accordant with the opera, than the house of God; and yet, strange to say, many of them are remunerated for their "*valuable services!*" Wherever this indecency is tolerated, a powerful hinderance to spiritual religion most unquestionably exists; and it ought at once to be removed; for ungodly choirs not only oppose the spirit of devotion, but very often occasion strifes and divisions amongst the members of the church, and excite a spirit of unholy contention very pernicious in its influence upon the Redeemer's cause.

In short, as the Lord has commanded his church to disciple the world, every thing tending to corrupt the church, weaken its moral power, and lessen its efficiency, must be re-

garded as an obstacle to the completion of the great work, and which the Saviour directs to be removed, that his purposes of love respecting the human family may receive their accomplishment, and all flesh behold his glory.

> "Thus saith the Lord; 'tis God commands;
> Workers with him the charge obey;
> Remove whate'er his work withstands,
> Prepare, prepare the Saviour's way."

CHAPTER IV.

It is not enough that a Christian does not hinder the Gospel. He is to be a "helper to the truth," and to consider himself, to a certain extent, responsible for the conversion of the world. That the church in its corporate character is so responsible, is generally admitted; but it is to be feared that many who make that admission, do nevertheless lose sight of their own individual responsibility. Men have certain duties to perform, and not only with respect to their families, but with respect to the church and the world, which cannot be performed by proxy. It is their duty, undoubtedly, as Christians, to seek the conver-

sion of sinners, and from this no power on earth can release them. They may give their money to support institutions for the accomplishment of that object: but that does not absolve them from praying for all men, or from every one "saying to his neighbour, and to his brother, Know ye the Lord." Employing one talent is no legitimate argument for hiding others in the earth; as *all* the powers with which we are invested are to be employed for the glory of God and the benefit of man. Every Christian should therefore feel that he has something to do in the conversion of the world; and that whatever may be his station in life, God calls him as the light of the world to enlighten others, and as the salt of the earth to impart a savour to those with whom he is surrounded.

As nothing is achieved in politics, arts, science, commerce, domestic economy, or personal religion, independently of system, it has occurred to me that, as far as human agency is concerned, it might be well to methodise the great work of the world's conversion, and according to some specified plan faithfully and fully to work out the benevolent and aggressive principles of the Gospel. I would there-

fore most respectfully suggest that *each converted person should endeavour to bring one soul to God in the course of one year.* And it is more than probable that he would succeed in the important undertaking, if he diligently, and in dependence upon divine aid, used all legitimate and practicable means for that purpose. Let him equally exert himself a second year to bring another soul to the knowledge of the truth; and there is no reason to believe that he would be less successful the second than the first year, in the work of faith and labour of love. Let each new convert be particularly instructed to do likewise, and urged to act thus consistently with his renewed nature, lest he should grieve the Holy Spirit, and lose the blessing imparted to his soul; and I see no cause that he should not also succeed to the same extent. In some respects he will never have better qualifications for this delightful employment, than when in all the sweetness, simplicity, and ardour of his first love. It is true he may have more zeal than knowledge; but the fact of his having so recently experienced a change, is likely to give him much influence with his former companions in sin, which he may use with the best effect. If this plan were adopted, and

faithfully acted upon, I have no doubt that the world, by the blessing of God, would soon undergo a great and salutary change.

If but three thousand truly converted Christians, filled with charity divine, and ardently desiring the world's conversion, would consent to act upon this suggestion, the result of their labours would very soon, I have no doubt, astonish the church, and spread peace and salvation through all the world. And surely the Church of England could furnish one thousand, the Dissenters a second thousand, and the Wesleyan Methodists a third thousand. If we therefore assume that three thousand persons in different parts of the world, or only *one half* that number, will undertake this plan, and faithfully and perseveringly work it out, its *success*, if *complete*, would double the number annually, and in TWENTY YEARS, as a reference to figures will prove, *embrace the entire population of the globe*.

It is true that I have made no allowance in my calculation for deaths, failures, and instances of unfaithfulness; but would not the deficiency arising from these causes, be more than supplied in the following manner?—

1. By children who are in a state of infancy, and need not that conversion of which we now

speak, but who, nevertheless, are included in the estimate of the world's population.

2. By other Christians above the fifteen hundred mentioned, who are in possession of the saving grace of God.

3. By those brought to Christ during the period specified, by the ordinary means of conversion, which with such co-operation would be greatly augmented, and become increasingly efficient.

4. By the greater success attending the exertions of many of those adopting this plan than that of gaining one convert in twelve months; as I have no doubt God would give greater success than that to a large number of his faithful servants.

I admit that multitudes of the Heathen might not be reached by this plan for some time, as *it can only work efficiently in connexion with the preaching of the word, and the ordinary means of grace;* but its influence upon Christendom would, I have no doubt, excite such a spirit of Missionary enterprise, as would soon find access to all nations, and furnish the requisite means for the world's conversion. As the church possesses those means now, nothing but more piety is wanting to render them available; and perhaps there is not any

thing so much calculated to promote an increase of piety amongst religious professors as the operation of the principle now recommended. Some Christians may think me too sanguine in my anticipations; but I apprehend all will admit, that if individual and systematic effort for the salvation of souls were to be energetically put forth by the followers of Christ generally, it could not but greatly promote the spread of true religion, and hasten the conversion of the world; and if the plan should but partially succeed, it ought not on that account to be abandoned, as partial success in such a work would be infinitely better than no success at all.

I would, therefore, recommend the truly pious of every Christian denomination to meet together in their respective churches for the adoption of this plan; and if not more than two or three can be found in each church or religious society willing to undertake the proposed work, let them not be discouraged, but act upon the following suggestions, most affectionately submitted, and I fear not the result of their systematic exertions:—

1. Let them in each church or religious community, in conjunction with their Minister wherever that is practicable, form themselves

into a class or classes, for the purpose of working out, by all legitimate and practicable means, the aggressive and benevolent principles of Christianity.

2. With the view of inducing and *fixing* the feeling of responsibility, and securing *various*, *vigorous*, and *persevering* efforts, let the members of each class fix upon an equal number of individuals, whose conversion they resolve specially to seek; and let the selection be made according to *providential intimations*.

3. Let the persons so uniting feel their own insufficiency to accomplish any good independently of divine aid; and in earnest prayer let them commit their cause to God, that his blessing may fully qualify them for the successful prosecution of their important undertaking.

4. Let each person seek intercourse with the individual assigned to his care, and by affectionate treatment, by seasonable conversation, by putting into his hands suitable books or tracts, by embracing every opportunity of getting him under the ministry of the word, and by special earnest prayer, in secret, endeavour to save his soul from death.

5. Let not the work degenerate into a system of proselytism, but let it be prosecuted in

the spirit of a generous catholicity, avoiding all bigotry and mere sectarianism; and let its agents simply seek the conversion of the soul, and rest not satisfied without it.

6. Let every new convert be specially and particularly instructed that it is his imperative duty to engage in the same work; and that if he do not thus act faithfully to the principles of his holy religion, the probability is that he will very soon lose his confidence and his comfort.

7. Let a monthly meeting be held to report progress, and for mutual counsel; and let no subject whatever be introduced into that meeting foreign to its important design.

8. Let not the plan in any of its operations interfere with the established and ordinary means of grace, but be regarded only as auxiliary to the public preaching of the Gospel; or the Lord will withhold his blessing from it.

Now here is a plan for the world's speedy conversion, comprising no complicated machinery, but marked with a simplicity adapted to every class of society, and every grade of intellect, and founded upon the *scriptural* and *acknowledged* principle,—that it is the duty of Christians to diffuse their religion, and to

labour in every possible way to effect the conversion of sinners. OUGHT IT NOT THEREFORE TO BE TRIED? The Gospel has been making progress in the world about eighteen hundred years; and it is computed there are not more than ten millions* of true Christians, or about one-hundredth part of the human family, savingly converted to God. Let conversions go on at this rate, and from the present period it will take upwards of one hundred and seventy seven thousand years for the Gospel to fill the whole earth. Something, therefore, must surely be wrong or defective in the present *mode* of seeking the salvation of the world. It is essential that Ministers faithfully preach the word, that the Bible be printed and extensively circulated in every language, and that Missionaries be sent to every heathen tribe; but these important measures alone will not do; for it is my settled conviction that the earth will never be filled with the knowledge of the Saviour until every man shall say to his brother and to his neighbour, "Know ye the Lord?" Christians must therefore awake to their individual responsibility; and new converts must be plainly told they will grieve the

* Todd's Sunday-School Teacher.

Holy Spirit and lose their religion, unless they obey its dictates, in seeking to save those around them. Had this been insisted upon from our pulpits, in a manner corresponding with its importance, as it respects both the church and the world, the moral aspect of the present day would have been very different from what we find it: but in some cases it has been entirely omitted, and in others treated in a way not likely to attract much attention; and hence sinners have been allowed to perish in the presence of Christian professors, without any effort being made to save them.

It appears to me that five things are absolutely necessary for the efficient and perfect operation of the plan proposed:—

1. The parties adopting this mode of working must be deeply pious, fully consecrated to God; for just in proportion as they are placed under the control of divine grace, will they be morally qualified for teaching others the great truths of the Gospel. David was evidently aware of this when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. *Then* will

I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." If Christians would, therefore, be extensively useful, they must seek to have a clean heart and a right spirit, to be entirely sanctified, to be "filled with the Spirit," and to have "every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ:" for such spiritual attainments will give them not only genuine love for souls and pure zeal in the Redeemer's cause, but great power with God in prayer; and it will save them from the influence of every selfish and mixed motive in their attempts to bring sinners to the foot of the cross.

2. The parties adopting this mode of working must place no confidence in any plan, however excellent, but rest exclusively upon divine aid for success; and never at any time or in any way receive the incense of praise which belongs to God, but most resolutely and invariably give all the glory to him, whose right it is to receive the adorations and praises of his people, for any good that may be effected by their exertions. If this be not constantly attended to, the machinery may move with order and beauty, but very soon there will be no "Spirit in the wheels."

3. The parties adopting this mode of

working must determine to persevere: and although they may for some time seem to labour in vain, that must not discourage their efforts; for in due time they shall reap if they faint not. If, on speaking to an individual about his soul, any of them should be insulted or even abused, he must not be deterred from persevering, or induced to say, in the language of a desponding unbelief, "It is in vain to attempt the conversion of that individual;" but rather let him, in such a case, be more diligent in his attention to him, and more ardent at a throne of grace in his behalf, remembering the long-suffering of God, and that men are not to be turned aside from the path of duty by the mere aspect of things, however discouraging; for he that "observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

4. The parties adopting this mode of working must be careful to use the divinely appointed means in the way most likely to produce the desired result. It is not enough for a Christian merely to speak to a sinner about his soul, but he must speak fitly; for a "word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." There must be a fitness not only in the *character* and *matter* of the

speaker, but in his spirit and manner of speaking; or, instead of softening, he will harden the hearts of those to whom he speaks, and excite powerful, and it may be unconquerable, prejudice against the Gospel of Christ. An abrupt and uncourteous manner, and a harsh and domineering spirit, are not only inconsistent with the Christian character, but they render that which is spoken, however good in itself, unfit for edification. "Speaking the truth in *love*," is the rule which the Apostle lays down. "It is not detracting from the force of truth, or attaching too much worth to persuasion, when we say that the success of truth depends very much on its adaptation to man's affections, and on the spirit of love in which it is administered. In making religious truth acceptable to the mind, we cannot expect God to depart from his usual mode of making other truths agreeable, or to interfere to make that convincing and persuasive to the affections, which is exhibited in a mode and manner forbidding and repulsive. In the heart of man there are such deep-rooted prejudices against the truth to which the Christian invites attention, that he needs to present it in every form of alluring and fascinating aspect of which it is capable. It is supposed that every good man can 'win souls;'

but he who achieves this, is described as 'wise,' knowing the elements of the soul, and how to act upon them. They that would win souls, must go wisely about it; for if they fail, it will be through lack of wisdom, not through the want of influence."*

5. The parties adopting this mode of working, must embrace the most likely opportunities of success. Tract distributers, in calling to exchange the tracts they have previously left with the families of a certain district, should embrace the opportunity of making such inquiries relative to the important subjects on which their little messengers of mercy treat, as may, by the blessing of God, lead to conviction, repentance, and salvation. Sunday-school Teachers, into whose hands a large portion of society is given, to be moulded and fashioned, should embrace the opportunity thus afforded, of seeking to give to it the form and likeness of the divine image which the Apostle describes to be "righteousness and true holiness." Pew-holders in any place of worship, who accommodate strangers with seats, should embrace the opportunity afforded at the conclusion of the service, of entering into conversation with them on the

* Jenkyn's Spirit and the Church, p. 474.

subject of the sermon; and by courteous behaviour, endeavour to make a favourable impression upon their minds, that, if possible, they may lead them to Jesus. Visiters of "The Strangers' Friend Society," who seek out and relieve the sick and friendless poor, should embrace the opportunity of telling them of the great Physician of souls, and how they may secure the "true riches." Indeed, Christians should "sow beside all waters." But whilst *they* should embrace every opportunity of usefulness, each believer should also, for reasons already stated, solemnly resolve, by the help of God, to pay special attention to some *one* individual, that, if possible, he may be the instrument of leading him to Jesus; and when the Lord has given him success with that one, let him fix upon another; as such systematic and concentrated exertions are more likely to succeed than those promiscuously and undeterminedly made.

The Wesleyan Methodists possess superior facilities for usefulness; and *without any new arrangement* their weekly classes might be so conducted as to work out with great efficiency the proposed plan. If every Leader would urge the subject upon the members of his class, and prevail with them to engage in the

delightful service of seeking to save souls, he might question them once a month on the difficulties and encouragements attending their exertions, and give them such counsel as their circumstances might require. This would keep the subject prominently before the people, as well as introduce into those meetings a pleasing and useful variety, and could not but be attended with blessed results. According to the latest returns, the Wesleyans under the charge of the British and American Conferences, amount to 1,302,127, exclusive of regular Ministers; and as they embrace persons of many different nations, who speak nearly every language of this "Babel earth," if they were to act consistently with their creed, and diligently and faithfully to work their beautifully-organized system, mighty results would be sure to follow; and if the simple plan of each one endeavouring to gain one annually to Christ, were to be acted upon by the whole Connexion with zeal and perseverance, the world, by the blessing of God, would soon be rescued from the grasp of the great usurper. This distribution of labour is as rational as it is scriptural; and if the world is to be converted, the great and glorious work must be attempted in *detail*, and every man who is on

the Lord's side must, in a spiritual sense, "fall upon his brother."

The system of direct personal exertion on the part of private members of the church has many things to recommend it. There are in the circle of every man's acquaintance, however small it may be, some persons whom the voice of a Minister may never be able to reach; for what Christian can survey the little sphere in which he might, without any violation of Christian wisdom, use endeavours for the conversion of sinners, without seeing some, and perhaps many, who never hear the Gospel, but notoriously estrange themselves from all probable means of religious improvement? If any one, therefore, were willing diligently to occupy only that little sphere, instruction and reproof would be brought to bear upon some persons, to whom the public ministry is rendered void by their cherished neglect: but to what an immense and almost immeasurable extent would the same effect be produced, if every one of the whole body of Christians were to do the same! Such an effort would tend to bring home the truths of salvation to several hundred times, and probably to several thousand times, as many persons as hear them now. The opportunities which Ministers can

embrace of promoting the good of souls, though far from being confined to the preaching of the word, are, nevertheless, few when compared with those which may be employed by Christians in private life. In the domestic circle, for example, whatever may be the station which a pious person may occupy in it, what endless and diversified occasions may be taken of inducing or fostering religious concern! How often may conversation be directed to this end! How instructively and convincingly may the example shine! How expressive and influential may the aspect of the countenance be! How readily may portions of suitable reading be recommended! Or, beyond the domestic circle, in the wider range of relations, friends, and general acquaintance, how much more may every private Christian do here, than can be done for the same persons by any Minister, even if his voice could reach them all! There is scarcely a moment or a word, subject of course to the strictest regulations of Christian wisdom, which might not be rendered more or less subservient to the pouring in of instruction or persuasion in some of the many channels which are accessible by private intercourse or personal friendship alone. In such efforts pecu-

liar facilities are afforded for insulating the parties concerned, and for appealing more pointedly to the conscience and the heart. Under the public ministry of the word, men are addressed in the mass, and there is a great difficulty in inducing a particular application of general truths; but in private intercourse, this impediment does not exist. The party addressed feels that he is so; and, however little he may be disposed to listen, there is a most favourable opportunity of pressing religion home upon his immediate and solemn regard. He cannot hide himself in the crowd, nor evade reproof without a distinct and painful consciousness that he is doing so. Neither should it be forgotten, that the system of direct individual exertion for souls multiplies, to an immense extent, the living exemplification of piety, by which instruction is so much facilitated. Although the personal character of Ministers may be more widely known than that of other men, it is still known but to a very few of those whom their voice may address: but when a Christian presses the great concerns of religion upon those with whom he is in frequent or perpetual intercourse, his example is continually within the observation of those to whom he speaks; and

if it be a consistent one, it will powerfully second his instructions. It seems to have been particularly with this view that the man who had been possessed with the devil, was desired to return, and, rather than any other person, become a pleader for Christ with his friends. They had seen him in his calamitous afflictions, and his presence would be a continual illustration of the power and grace of the Saviour. Hence the peculiar advantage of his labours; and hence the wisdom of the seemingly unkind decision of our Lord, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."

It is one circumstance that tends to diminish the effect produced by Ministers, that their appeals to the conscience are distant from each other. The impressions of the Sabbath are but too subject to be effaced by the occupations of the week, like footsteps upon the sand by the returning tide. But the influence and exertions of private Christians may be brought to bear in many cases with great frequency, and in some, as in domestic life, with almost entire constancy. Efforts thus continually repeated have a greater probability of success, as the hardest stones are broken by the repe-

tition of moderate strokes; while any advantage which may be gained is in the same method more easily secured. Those who know how difficult it is to make an impression upon "the stony heart" at all, and how much more difficult it is to retain it there, will know also the value of this consideration. Besides, the efforts for conversion made by private Christians are accompanied by a variety of most favourable influences. Every Christian sustains some of the relations of life; and whatever he does for the conversion of another, carries with it the influence connected with the relations he bears. Now, excepting where it is destroyed by unkindness of general conduct, the influence thus arising is in all cases kindly and powerful. If a child has any thing pressed upon him by a parent, it comes with the force of parental authority and love. If a parent has any thing properly suggested to him by a child, it cannot but breathe touchingly of filial affection and concern. The same illustration might be applied to all the relations of life, with a force corresponding with the kindliness which they are adapted to generate, and the actual kindness with which they have been filled. All these influences are important auxiliaries to the

cause of Christ, and they give private Christians many advantages over the Ministers of the Gospel. One class of influences indeed belongs to Ministers, and "full proof" should be made of it; but so likewise should it be with all other influences which can be brought to bear on the same end.

The personal efforts required of private Christians are neither impracticable nor difficult, but are pre-eminently easy. It is not necessary that Christians should go two or three miles to a village, or to a distant part of the town in which they live, in order to be useful; for their mission is to their "*neighbour and to their brother*,"—"their work is in their own house, and at their feet all the day long. It requires no neglect of the ordinary duties of life, no absence from business, no violent effort, no cost of money. The efforts now advocated are such as Christians can make *in*, and not *out of*, the common occupations and intercourse of life, without any deviation from diligence in business, propriety of manners, or the necessary wisdom of piety. Such efforts have immense advantages in comparison with any other which can be conceived."*

* Hinton's Individual Effort.

CHAPTER V.

It has already been stated that the plan of individual and systematic effort for the conversion of the world, which with much diffidence I have ventured to suggest, can work efficiently only in connexion with the ministry of the word. "Preach the Gospel to every creature," is the Saviour's commission to his people; which they are bound, by every obligation which the love of God and man imposes, faithfully to fulfil. Indeed, the Apostle represents the salvation of the Heathen as depending on the church sending forth Missionaries. His language is, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace,

and bring glad tidings of good things!" But is the Christian church in circumstances to execute the commission of our glorious Redeemer? Undoubtedly she is. The Lord never imposes an obligation upon his people which they are unable to discharge.

If the population of the unchristianized world be taken at six hundred millions, its lowest estimate,* not fewer than twenty thousand Missionaries would be required to give to every thirty thousand persons *one* Missionary; and if, on an average, the expenses of each should amount to the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds per annum, five millions would be annually required to support the whole,—a sum which in this country alone might be contributed without any painful sacrifice, if the plan recommended in the preceding chapter were to be acted upon by the churches. Christians are certainly not sufficiently exerting themselves in the Missionary cause, or they would present much larger offerings upon its altar. "If we put in contrast what is contributed by Christians of all denominations to our principal religious Societies, and what is spent or contributed in a few other ways,

* There are different estimates of the world's population.

perhaps we may be surprised, if not as *Christians* made ashamed of our conduct.

"*Contributions to the principal Societies for the spread of Christianity, for the year ending May*, 1839.

"FOREIGN MISSIONS.

	TOTAL RECEIPTS. £.	s.	d.
Baptist Missionary Society	22,416	1	11
Church of Scotland Missions........	6,000	0	0
Church Missionary Society	72,031	6	1
Colonial Missionary Society........	2,356	6	6½
Colonial Church Society	1,483	4	4
European Missionary Society	1,390	10	0
Gospel Propagation Society	71,308	18	2
London Missionary Society	65,490	10	5
Moravian Missionary Society	4,355	13	1
Wesleyan Missionary Society	84,818	12	2
Total	£331,651	2	8½

"BIBLE SOCIETIES.*

	£.	s.	d.
British and Foreign Bible Society	105,255	2	11
Naval and Military Bible Society	2,804	0	3
Trinitarian Bible Society	3,059	0	7
Christian Knowledge Society	90,363	0	0
Total..	£201,481	3	9

"* This includes the money received from the sale of Bibles by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and of Bibles and other books by the Christian Knowledge Society. The free contributions do not amount in the whole of these Societies to more than £70,000."

"MISSIONS FOR LONDON AND ENGLAND.

	£.	s.	d.
Baptist Home Missionary Society	2,693	14	3
Christian Instruction Society	1,358	10	10*
Church Pastoral-Aid Society	10,423	4	5
Home Missionary Society	7,000	0	0
London City Mission	4,820	8	5
Total..	£26,295	17	11

"TOTAL.

The principal Foreign Missions	331,651	2	8½
Bible Societies	201,481	3	9
Missions for London and England ..	26,295	17	11
	£559,428	4	4½

"*Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom for one year, ending January 5th,* 1839.

"CUSTOMS AND EXCISE.

	£.	£.
Spirits.		
Foreign	1,389,371	
Rum	1,411,067	
British	5,467,201	
		8,267,639
Malt	4,932,080	
Hops	302,906	
		5,234,986
Wine		1,846,057
Tobacco and Snuff		3,561,812

"* This includes sale of Tracts, &c."

Horses	377,477	
Carriages	442,757	
Dogs................	156,200	
		976,434
Post Horses		241,266
	Total..	£20,128,194

"Thus it will appear that all the contributions to the religious Societies just mentioned, do not amount to the sum paid in taxes on *carriages and dogs alone*, the latter being £598,957. The *duty* paid on spirits, malt and hops, wine, tobacco and snuff, horses, carriages, and dogs, is £20,128,194! and the great religious Societies mentioned above, deducting the sale of books, did not receive last year half a million!

"The amount of malt consumed by the London brewers in 1837 was 5,692,360 bushels, which at 7*s*. per bushel amounts to £1,992,325. The amount of spirits sent out with permits for consumption in the metropolis in 1837 was as follows:

	GALLONS.	AVERAGE.	£.
Foreign Spirits	1,270,931	at 20*s*. per gallon	1,270,931
British Do.	5,354,388	at 10*s*. per gallon	2,677,194
		Total*..	£3,948,125

* This does not include contraband spirits.

The quantity of Tobacco consumed was	£.
3,636,362 lbs. at 5*s*.	909,090
And of snuff consumed 1,181,723 lbs. at 5*s*.	295,430
Total ..£1,204,520	

Total spent on malt, spirits, tobacco, and snuff, in the metropolis in 1837, £7,144,970!

"There can be no want of money to do good with if we are disposed to apply what we have, in the fear of God, for the benefit of perishing souls."*

From the above most humiliating calculations, it appears that the mere *duty* paid on malt and hops would more than supply the wants of twenty thousand Missionaries; and that the amount expended in the metropolis alone, in 1837, on spirits, tobacco, and snuff, articles certainly not amongst the *necessaries of life*, would have supported a similar number, and left a surplus of £152,645. And what is still more deeply affecting, the expenses of two hundred thousand Missionaries might be met by the sum spent in distilled and fermented liquors throughout Great Britain and Ireland.†

* Christian Guardian.

† Third Report of the New British and Foreign Temperance Society.

God calls us as a Christian nation to preach the Gospel to every creature, and has given us pecuniary resources fully equal to the discharge of that important duty. It is estimated that there are ten millions of sincere Christians in the world; and if we suppose that but two millions and a half, a *fourth* of that number, in connexion with the different Protestant Churches, would consent, for the sake of Christ and perishing souls, to deny themselves to the extent of but one half-pint of malt-liquor per day, or of any other thing of the same value, and consecrate their savings to the Missionary cause, those savings would in each case be about two pounds annually, and in the aggregate the noble sum of £5,000,000, the amount required for the support of twenty thousand Missionaries. The Wesleyan Methodists alone, in different parts of the world, exclusive of their Ministers, as we have already seen, number 1,302,127 communicants; and if they were to act upon the above suggestion, they would raise nearly one half of the sum required to support the Missionary agents specified. I am aware that many persons are of opinion that the Wesleyans are already exceedingly abundant in their contributions; and perhaps,

when compared with some other sections of the church, they are so: but certainly they have not yet, as a body, made many sacrifices for the cause of Christ. Let the amount contributed throughout the Connexion in support of the ENTIRE *machinery of Methodism*, be equally distributed amongst its members, and I am prepared to prove by the most indisputable evidence, that even British Methodists, in their support of that form of Christianity which has given them habits of sobriety and industry, and enriched many whom it found in poverty, as well as conferred upon them blessings more precious than rubies, do not, on an average, contribute annually quite *twenty shillings* per member!*

Fasting is a religious duty, and was strictly observed in the Apostolic age. The venerated Wesley was so impressed with its importance that he requested the people of his charge to observe it privately one day in the week, and publicly once in every three months. In this respect Methodism is not what is was in the days of Wesley, there being little attention paid by his followers to the duty of fasting; and although they still have their quar-

* This does not, of course, include their late Centenary contributions.

terly fasts published in their Magazine, and announced from their pulpits, few comparatively take any notice of them. This in my estimation is very detrimental to that body. If its several members would once a quarter observe a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, that God would revive and extend his work, the happiest results might be expected. Fasting, however, should never be made the means of improving our finances; but the amount saved by this scriptural self-denial should be sacredly devoted to purposes of Christian charity. Now it has already been stated that the members of the Wesleyan Body amount to more than a million and a quarter, and if they would consent to observe their quarterly fast regularly, and consecrate its savings to the Missionary cause, the result would be most cheering. They might be divided into four classes: and if the first class saved one shilling per quarter by fasting, the second nine-pence, the third six-pence, and the fourth three-pence, the handsome sum of £162,762 would be the annual amount thus raised. The due observance of this rule would promote bodily health as well as spiritual vigour: and if other denominations of Christians would act upon a similar plan, ample funds for

the conversion of the world would be laid upon the Missionary altar, and derived from a source which could not but receive the divine approbation, and prove a general blessing to the church.

In the present day a powerful temperance movement is being made, and total abstainers have placed themselves in a position to make an irresistible impression upon the church, and to influence the destinies of the world, if they are disposed to do so. They are supposed to number, in different parts of the world, not fewer than ten millions. Now assuming that only *one-third* of them belong to some section of the Protestant church, if *they* would consent to contribute to the Missionary Societies of their respective churches, as a thank-offering to God, one penny each, or the cost of but one glass of beer, per day, they would thus raise the sum necessary for the maintenance of twenty thousand Missionaries ; and such a line of conduct could not but deeply impress the church with the importance, benevolence, and mightiness of their operations, and confer an invaluable blessing upon a perishing world.

Thus we perceive with what ease, and in how many different ways, funds may be raised

for the conversion of the dark nations of the earth. That the Missionary cause may be supported, and work with greater efficiency, I would respectfully offer the following suggestions :—

1. Every Christian ought to be plainly and solemnly told, that it is as much his duty to seek, by all practicable and legitimate means, the conversion of the world, as it is his duty to cultivate a watchful and devotional spirit; and every person, on his admittance into any religious community, should have the subject brought clearly before him as an indispensable line of conduct, which he is bound to observe, if he would not grieve the Holy Spirit, or act inconsistently with his Christian profession. I fear this duty has been too frequently kept out of sight, or has been represented as a matter which may be omitted without seriously, if at all, implicating the Christian character. It is high time that it was brought out with that prominence which its importance with respect to both the church and the world most unquestionably demands.

2. Professors of religion should be shown the absurdity and folly of praying for the conversion of the Heathen, if they will not, according to their ability, support Missionary operations. We have already seen that divine

truth is the great instrument of salvation: he therefore who prays for the conversion of the heathen world, but refuses to contribute any thing for the promulgation of that truth amongst its dark and wretched population, is like the husbandman who prays for his daily bread, but neglects to cultivate his fields, and sow his grain. Besides, the prayer which proceeds from a heart that loves money more than souls, and withholds what God most equitably requires, is not likely to avail. Perhaps this is the chief reason that prayer offered up in the church for the universal spread of Christianity is not more successful. I know a person who frequently, and with considerable ardour, engages in supplication to God for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the unsaved world, at the monthly Missionary prayer-meetings, but who refuses to give any thing to the interesting cause for which he prays, although in circumstances to do so, alleging that he always remembers the Missionaries and their work at the throne of grace. Mistaken man! The conversion of the world will never be facilitated by his prayers, whilst he thus criminally comes before the Lord empty.

3. Contributors to Missionary Societies

should be taught to observe the scriptural standard of giving. They must be informed that God expects them to contribute according to their ability; and that in casting their offering into the Missionary treasury, they are not to be influenced by the giving of others, but to give as the Lord has prospered them. In some instances I have known individuals contribute their guinea annually, and although in circumstances indescribably better than when they first gave it, yet so tenaciously adhere to that amount, as if God had said they were to give their guinea, their whole guinea, and nothing but their guinea. This certainly is very culpable; arguing, as it does, that the parties are not governed by a right principle. I have sometimes been asked what proportion of a Christian's income should be devoted to the cause of God. But no standard of percentage can be given; as one per cent. on the income of certain parties would no doubt be more acceptable to the Lord than ten, or even twenty per cent., on the income of others; for He does not so much estimate the value of the offering by its amount, as by the amount remaining in the possession of the giver. The scriptural standard is, not to give any specific sum, but every man to give according to his

ability. Several pious persons, feeling their responsibility in reference to the conversion of the world, and looking to that period when they must give an account of their stewardship, do appropriate what they believe to be an equitable percentage of their income to the support of Christian Missions. Some give five per cent., others ten, others twenty, and others more than that; nor do they find themselves any poorer for their liberality, and they have the great luxury of doing good to the most wretched of the human family. I know a gentleman who is wealthy, but very abundant in his offerings. He told me some time ago, that he had four reasons for giving largely. The first was, that his property might be made a blessing to him in this world, and not a curse: the second was, that he might not be condemned as an unfaithful servant, when he should give an account of his stewardship: the third was, that he might be an instrument of good to those who required help, and who without his interposition might perish: and the fourth was, that he might effectually oppose and conquer his tendency to covetousness. He stated that his besetting sin was the love of the world; and on a certain occasion, when

wealth was pouring in upon him from various sources, he was very powerfully assailed by it. He left his office, and retired to pray against the besetment; but was not delivered. He retired again, and prayed more earnestly; but felt no relief. A third time he besieged the throne of grace; but his soul still adhered to the dust of the earth. Whilst musing upon his state, it was suddenly impressed upon his mind that he ought to increase his liberality; and yielding to that impression, he made a munificent offering to the poor, doubled all his subscriptions to charitable objects, and thus gained a complete victory over the love of the world. He also informed me, that whenever he was in danger of his besetting sin, he invariably increased his givings, and strongly recommended this as the best cure for covetousness. The rule of proportion should also be observed in giving; for certainly a mere local charity, however valuable, has not the same claim for support, as that charity whose object is to convert the whole human family; and yet there are those who give their ten shillings, or their guinea, to every institution they support, whether its object may be to improve a flower or to save a world!

4. Directors of the different Missionary

Societies should confer with each other on the appointment of their respective Missionaries, that all unnecessary interference with each other's fields of labour may be avoided. It is, in my opinion, very imprudent for different religious bodies to send their agents to cultivate the same ground, when the vast wilderness overspread with noxious weeds remains unexplored. Such conduct, in some cases, may serve the purposes of a mere party; but its tendency will be to interrupt brotherly love, and to excite in new converts the spirit of bigotry, and lead them to the practice of an unprofitable controversy.

"It is desirable," says one* who had fully considered the subject, "for every society to have a distinct sphere of labour among a heathen people. Much as I should rejoice in being associated with an Episcopalian, a Baptist, or a Methodist brother, who did not attach primary importance to secondary objects, yet the interests of every Mission, especially in the early stages of its progress, seem to me to require another line of conduct. The natives, though comprehending but imperfectly our objects, would at once discern a difference in the modes of worship, and their attention

* Rev. John Williams.

would of necessity be divided and distracted. Being also of an inquisitive disposition, they would demand a reason for every little deviation, which would lead to explanations, first from the one party and then from the other; and thus evils would arise, which otherwise might never have existed." Abraham's advice to Lot is applicable to Missionary Societies, and should be acted upon by them, whatever temporary inconvenience it may occasion. He said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

5. Missionaries should encourage a native ministry. It is most obvious that the heathen world will never be supplied with an adequate number of foreign Missionaries, as it would require not fewer than six hundred thousand, to give but *one* to every thousand of its population; and certainly, when we consider its circumstances of ignorance and depravity, that proportion of pastoral aid is not too large. Missionaries from Christendom must carry the

glad tidings of salvation to the heathen world; but the conversion of its overpowering numbers will, in my opinion, mainly depend upon native teachers, who are fully acquainted with the languages and customs of the people, and in some other respects have better qualifications for the work than foreigners generally can possess, whatever be the culture of their minds, or the depth of their piety. It is worthy of remark, that the glorious success attending the operations of the London Missionary Society in the isles of the Pacific Ocean is, to a great extent, the result of God's blessing upon the labours of native teachers: and the remarkable revival of religion which took place in the Friendly Islands, in 1834, in connexion with the efforts of the Wesleyan Society, in which many thousands were converted to God, began under the ministry of a native teacher; for whilst he was preaching on the compassion of Christ, the Holy Ghost fell upon the people that heard the word, and a scene followed, probably unequalled in the Christian church since the days of the Apostles. As there can be no doubt that native, and not foreign Preachers, must ultimately become the pastors of the people, Missionaries should not entertain any prejudices against them; but

employ every possible legitimate effort to raise them up, and qualify them for the interesting and important work. If Institutions were to be established in India, Africa, Polynesia, and the West Indies, for the theological training of native converts whose natural and spiritual endowments may point them out as proper persons to be employed as ambassadors to their respective countrymen, the happiest results would no doubt follow. This, in my estimation, would be a more legitimate application of the funds of Missionary Societies, than that of expending them in the education of the children of the Heathen; for whatever may be said in favour of such education, it is certainly not the Apostolic way of seeking to convert the world. My views on the subject entirely coincide with those of the Rev. Ralph Stott, expressed in a communication to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, dated April 8th, 1841. Having given a delightful account of the conversion of several of the wild Jungle Veddahs, he says, "We ought to have schools in their Jungle villages, where the people are embracing the Gospel; for though *experience has taught me that schools have done very little for us comparatively amongst the mere Heathen*, yet I consider them of first-rate importance amongst

those Heathens who have embraced Christianity."

6. Every Christian Missionary should instruct his converts from Heathenism to work out the aggressive principles of Christianity, by exerting themselves, in every possible way, to bring sinners to Jesus. And if the plan of each convert annually leading a sinner to the enjoyment of a Saviour's blessing were to be adopted, and successfully acted upon, the thirty thousand persons we have supposed to be placed under the care of each Missionary, would, in considerably less than twenty years, be the recipients of the grace of God. Such a plan, I have no doubt, would also raise up all that pastoral aid amongst the people themselves which such a state of things would necessarily require.

But some will probably say, "If we have the means of supporting twenty thousand Missionaries, where can we find the men? The Christian church has no such number of men to offer upon the Missionary altar." Perhaps not: but let the plan suggested in the previous chapter be acted upon with zeal and perseverance throughout the various sections of the church of Christ; and the men will, no doubt, be forthcoming when required. When

the live coal touched the lips of Isaiah, purging away his sin, he offered at once to undertake a most difficult and hazardous mission, exclaiming, "Here am I, send me!" And there are many in Christendom who want nothing but the live coal to lead them to a similar result. The Lord has found men for the work of evangelizing the world in proportion to the means his people have raised for supplying their wants. Fifty years ago, the Wesleyans could not have found three hundred and eighty Missionaries for the heathen world, because they had no funds for their support: but no sooner did they possess those funds, than the requisite number were baptized for the important work of preaching amongst the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

But perhaps others will say, that if we had both money and men for the conversion of the world, the work could not at the present period be effected, as many places are inaccessible to Missionaries, and it would be quite impossible to obtain a Christian establishment in them. So it may now appear. But cannot the Governor amongst the nations raise up one and put down another, as seemeth good in his sight? And can he not, as in ancient days, "open the two-leaved gates" before his

people, whenever they are prepared to enter in? Has the church ever raised funds for the conversion of the world, and been obliged to appropriate them to some other object, because there was no providential opening amongst the Heathen? Never. On the contrary, openings have been furnished in proportion to the Missionary character of the church. Perhaps there never was a time, since the days of the Apostles, that so much was doing for the heathen world as there is at the present: and yet we perceive no lack of openings for Missionary operations; but, on the contrary, Providence has gone before his people, beckoning onward the Committees and Directors of their Missionary Societies to enter one interesting field of labour after another, until they have left their respective churches far behind, groaning under a debt, which would never have been contracted had those churches done their duty as workers together with God. But suppose we should have both men and money without any adequate openings, are we on that account to yield to despondency, prove unfaithful to our trust, and relax our energies in the glorious work? Certainly not. God may thus try our faith and love. Besides, Christianity is the same thing now as it was

when, under its influence, its disciples encountered the most formidable opposition, and cheerfully made choice of the fires of martyrdom, rather than prove unfaithful to their principles, or ungrateful to their God. And are there no men in the Christian church willing to become martyrs in the cause of the world's conversion? Assuredly there ought to be; and, unless I am greatly mistaken, there *are* such men, who, if called upon, would be willing to shed their blood in the Missionary cause, if, like the blood of the ancient martyrs, it might become the seed of the church.

CHAPTER VI.

Efforts for the conversion of mankind, and especially when they are systematized, are supposed by some to interfere with the sovereignty of God. Those persons conceive God's sovereignty to be something very different from what it is,—implying such an arbitrary disposal of events, and particularly of the gift of his Spirit, as to preclude a rational employment of means for the conversion of the world. But there is no evidence from the

Bible that God exercises any such sovereignty as that. There are no facts to prove it; but every thing goes to show that God has connected means with the end through all the departments of his government, both in nature and in grace. There is no *natural* event in which his own agency is not concerned. He has not built the creation like a vast machine, that will go alone without his farther care. He has not retired from the universe to let it work of itself; but exercises over it a universal superintendence and control; and yet every event in nature has been brought about by means. He neither administers providence, nor grace, with that sort of sovereignty that dispenses with the use of means; and there is no more sovereignty in the one case, than in the other.

The established connexion between the use of appropriate means and the result, or between cause and effect, is of the most encouraging nature to vigorous and persevering efforts to bring sinners to God. "I believe," says the Rev. C. G. Finney, "that the connexion between the right use of means to save sinners, and the accomplishment of that important end, is as philosophically sure, as between the right use of means to raise grain and a crop of

wheat. I believe, in fact, it is more certain, and that there are fewer instances of failure. The effect is more certain to follow. Probably the law concerning cause and effect is more undeviating in spiritual than in natural things, and so there are fewer exceptions, as I have before said. The paramount importance of spiritual things makes it reasonable that it should be so. Take the Bible, the nature of the case, and the history of the church, all together, and you will find fewer failures in the use of means for the revival and extension of religion, than in farming, or any worldly business. In worldly business there are sometimes cases, where counteracting causes annihilate all a man can do. In raising grain, for instance, there are cases which are beyond the control of man; such as drought, hard winter, worms, and so on. So in labouring to promote a revival, there are many things occur to counteract it; something or other turning up to divert the public attention from religion, which may baffle every effort; but I believe there are fewer such cases in the moral than in the natural world. I have seldom seen an individual fail, when he used the means for promoting a revival, or the conversion of sinners, in earnest, in the manner pointed out in the

word of God. I believe a man may enter on the work of promoting the salvation of souls, with as reasonable expectation of success, as he can enter upon any other work with an expectation of success; with the same expectation as the farmer has of a crop when he sows his grain. I have sometimes seen this tried, and succeed under circumstances the most forbidding that can be conceived."*

The aggressive principle upon which the plan suggested for the world's conversion is based, I have known worked out with encouraging success. A female with whom I am acquainted acted upon it with great zeal and diligence; and in the course of three years she had the unspeakable pleasure of seeing twelve persons walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost whom she had been instrumental in bringing into that blessed state of Christian experience; and many of them had been living in circumstances of most revolting depravity. The same line of conduct was adopted by three young men, private members of the Wesleyan society, of most fervent and decided piety; and so successful were their efforts, that above thirty

* Lectures on Revivals of Religion, American 6th edition, page 29.

persons, of whose conversion no rational doubt could be entertained, were, in *one year*, led to the Sinners' Friend by their truly benevolent and energetic exertions.

I have also known classes in the Wesleyan society act upon this principle; and, generally speaking, they have in the course of one year doubled their numbers; and one class for a considerable time doubled its number every quarter, and was divided four times a year. Other examples might be mentioned. An interesting female whom I know found peace with God in a prayer-meeting, and went home and told her friends what great things the Lord had done for her. A deep impression was made upon their minds by her statements, and in less than six months her husband, her father, her brother, her lodger, and two of her sisters were brought to the Saviour, and admitted into his church, as the result of her Christian exertions. A gentleman one Sabbath evening, on his way to his usual place of worship, spoke to a female who was violating the Sabbath and in other respects sinning against the Lord, and prevailed with her to accompany him to the house of God. She was deeply awakened under the sermon she heard; and in a few weeks obtained peace with

God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Her conversion attracted the attention of her companions in sin, many of whom became deeply impressed by her altered character; and in one year, the conversion of that one female led, either directly or indirectly, to the conversion of more than fifty individuals. Another gentleman of my acquaintance was, on a certain occasion, in a draper's shop on business, when a proud young man entered, and, as he was not immediately attended to, he began to use most profane and insulting language, and in other respects to behave most improperly. As soon as his wrath had a little abated, the gentleman in question called him on one side, and said, "Sir, I hope you will not be offended with me, for expressing a sincere wish that you may in future avoid the temper which I have just witnessed, as it tends to injure you in the estimation of others, and is inconsistent with a preparation for heaven." "Do you know the eleventh commandment, Sir?" said he, sternly. "Yes, I do," was the reply. "Then why don't you attend to it?" "I am attending to it at this very moment." "You are not, Sir; or you would not have interfered with me; for the eleventh commandment is that 'every man mind his own business.'" "If

that be the eleventh commandment," said the gentleman, "my conduct is in strict accordance with it; for, as a Christian, it is my business to do all in my power to convert a sinner from the error of his ways, that, if possible, I may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. But I think the eleventh commandment is the '*new* commandment' given unto us, 'that we love one another;' and had I not loved you, I should not have warned you of your danger, but allowed you to sport with your soul on the brink of hell." He was silent for some time, and soon afterwards departed in a very thoughtful mood. The words thus spoken proved like a nail fastened in a sure place, and resulted in the young man's conversion to God. The same gentleman, on another occasion, said something to an individual on the necessity of personal religion, and affectionately exhorted him to forsake his sins, and turn to the Lord with all his heart. Having done so, he left him; and their next meeting took place in another country, after the lapse of several years. The gentleman was stopping at a lodging-house, in a large commercial town, and one day a person drove up in a carriage, and inquired for him. He was shown into the drawing room;

and no sooner did he fix his eyes upon the gentleman, than he burst into tears, and wept loudly; but after a short time he recovered himself, and said, "Sir, I think you don't know me; but perhaps you may remember saying something to an individual about his soul, several years ago, whom you met in R— under somewhat painful circumstances." "I have some faint recollection of it," said the gentleman. "That individual," said he, "soon afterwards left the country, but with a deeply wounded conscience, occasioned by what you said to him; and when he arrived in this town, he sought the Lord with all his heart, and soon obtained peace through believing. He is now happy in God; also a Leader and Local Preacher in the Wesleyan Connexion; and that individual is now before you." Thus was the bread cast upon the waters found after many days.

Perhaps Christians cannot adopt a more efficient plan of communicating religious truth to others, with the view of awakening their consciences, and exciting them to seek the salvation of their souls, than that of detailing on proper occasions the particulars of their own conversion. This plan was acted upon not only by David, as we learn from several

of his psalms, but also by the great Apostle to the Gentiles, as his public discourses sufficiently prove; and indeed it was a mode of teaching very generally adopted by the primitive Christians. It is true that great consistency of character is absolutely necessary to render this method of seeking to do good successful, but the same is necessary to give efficiency to any other mode of usefulness; for if Christians would win souls to Christ, their conversation must be "chaste, and coupled with fear:" if they would have others to glorify their heavenly Father, they must "let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works:" and if they would see the wicked honour God, in the day of visitation they must "by well doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

But, perhaps, many persons who wish to speak to sinners, with the view of bringing them to Christ, are deterred from so doing in consequence of not knowing how to begin and prosecute the work with any hope of success. The following extract from the letter of a lady may afford such persons counsel and encouragement. Knowing the usefulness of its author in the conversion of sinners, I applied to her for information relative to her proceed-

ings, and received the following communication:—

"I was from home at a watering-place when the Lord revealed himself to my soul, and in the overflowings of my first love, I began the same week to speak in his name. One day whilst walking out, I met with a lady, a perfect stranger, whom I accosted by saying, 'You seem ill, and alone like myself.' 'Yes,' said the lady. 'Pray are you from L——?' 'I am, and have been seeing my husband to the packet, who is returning home this morning.' 'I am also from L——: may I ask what place of worship you attend?' 'I attend Mr. D——'s chapel.' 'Have you found peace with God?' 'No; and that is a subject which greatly troubles me.' I then told her how it might be obtained, and encouraged her by my own experience to look for it at once. I returned to my lodgings, and wrote to a friend in L——, requesting him to call upon this lady's husband, and speak to him about his soul. He did so; and the work thus commenced was followed up, until, by the blessing of God upon the means used, the lady, her husband, and their servant were all truly converted. On my return to my family, I felt a deeper baptism of the

Spirit, and longed to be useful in bringing souls to God. Soon afterwards I had occasion to go into a shop to make a purchase; and being shown an article that I inquired for, I said to the lady who served me, 'This is too smart.' 'What!' said she, 'are you a Methodist?' I replied in the affirmative; and turning pale she said, 'My father belonged to that body, and sometime preached in —— chapel.' I then spoke to her on the importance of personal religion; and told her that I should feel great pleasure in accommodating her with a seat, if she would attend the chapel. She consented, went, and was deeply affected. The same week I called upon her, to give her such advice as I might find to be necessary; and ascertained that her husband kept a gambling-house. They had four children, the two eldest of whom were very fond of the theatre, but I prevailed upon them to attend the Sunday-school; and after many an interview with the family, the conversion of the mother and her two eldest children has been the blessed result. Some time after this I went into another shop to purchase a box, and the person who showed it to me was an interesting young woman with a child in her arms. I began to caress the child, and made some

inquiries about it, when she said, 'I am not the mistress of this house; but as my husband left me when this child was but a month old, I came here to my sister.' 'Poor dear!' said I, 'if you have not religion, you very greatly need its support and comfort.' On inquiry I found she did not attend any place of worship regularly, and I invited her to attend —— chapel, and said that it would afford me pleasure to do her all the good in my power. She complied with the invitation, and called upon me the next week to inquire for a situation, when a very suitable one most providentially offered, to which I sent her, giving her the best advice in my power, and feeling persuaded that the Lord would bring her to himself. In a few weeks she found the blessing of pardon, whilst her excellent mistress was praying with her, and is now a most devoted Christian. On another occasion having to get a card signed by a gentleman, I went to his house, and his wife told me he was not at home, but would shortly return, and invited me to take a seat. I did so, and said to her, 'You don't seem to have good health.' 'No,' said she, 'I have too much sorrow, anxiety, and labour to be well.' I embraced this opportunity of speaking to her affectionately on the necessity

of possessing true religion, and inquired if she attended a place of worship. She told me she did not, but her daughter had a sitting in a Methodist chapel, where she had attended for four years, but that no person had ever spoken to her, or taken the least notice of her. I felt this to be a great reproach, and determined to see the daughter. In a few days I waited upon her, and the Lord so blessed that interview that she at once united herself with God's people, and in a short time was made happy in the love of Christ. On the evening of a 'fast day' as I was going to a prayer-meeting, I met a female coming away from the door of the vestry in which it was to be held, and said to her, 'Won't you go in?' 'I thought,' said she, 'there had been preaching.' 'No,' said I, 'there is to be a prayer-meeting; and if you will go in, I will see that you have a comfortable seat.' She consented; and whilst in the meeting it was powerfully impressed upon my mind not to allow the stranger to depart without having some more conversation with her; and accordingly when we came out I walked along the street with her, and found that her mind was solemnly impressed. I simplified the way of salvation by faith, and invited her to a class-meeting. She accepted the invita-

tion, took a sitting in the chapel, soon found peace with God, and then felt emboldened to conduct family worship with her children and servant in the presence of an infidel husband and brother, who frequently walked about the room, whilst she was thus employed. I might detail other cases, but perhaps these will suffice as specimens of my humble attempts to serve my generation by the will of God, and as illustrations of that truth which states that 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that no flesh should glory in his presence.' With the view of obtaining access to certain individuals, and of extending my influence, which I delight to use for God's glory, I employ several tradesmen, not confining my custom to one green-grocer, one butcher, &c., but distributing it amongst many, and by the blessing of the Lord I have prevailed with all of them to close their shops on the Sabbath, and many of them to attend a place of worship." The most of the parties to whose conversion this letter refers are fully known to the author, and of their piety he entertains not the slightest doubt.

CHAPTER VII.

It is not possible for men to occupy a neutral position in reference to the salvation of souls; for "he that gathereth not with me," says Christ, "scattereth abroad:"—that is, he that does not co-operate with Christ in the great work of saving souls, does not on that account remain neutral, but places himself by his omission of duty in opposition to their salvation. It is either the duty of Christians to endeavour to save souls, or it is not: if it be their duty, and souls perish through their neglect of it, the Lord most assuredly will not hold them guiltless, when he shall come to make inquisition for blood. "If thou forbear," says Solomon, "to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain: if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul doth he not know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" We ought not to forget the fate of the man who hid his talent in the earth. When his lord came to reckon with him, he said, "Lord,

I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine." He did not, like many persons, misapply his talent, but allowed it to remain dormant, and was in consequence adjudged a slothful and wicked servant, and cast into outer darkness. It is to be feared that many persons within the pale of the Christian church very much resemble this man. They have a talent for usefulness, but are afraid to use it lest some should consider them obtrusive, others withhold from them their favours, and others treat them with contempt; and hence they will permit their customer, their neighbour, their friend, or even their relative, to drop into hell without ever warning him of his danger. O the horror-smitten countenances that will appear on the coming of the Lord, when the hidden talents shall be produced, and when it shall be made manifest that so many souls have been lost through the neglect of others! Perhaps a child through the neglect of a parent, or a wife through the neglect of a husband, or a countless multitude through the neglect of those with whom the Lord had entrusted the Gospel, and commanded them to preach it to every creature. It is a most distressing thought that tens of thousands of souls

are now writhing in the agony of hell, that in all probability might have been enjoying the glories of heaven, had Christians done their duty. Could we be placed in circumstances affording an opportunity of conversing with those lost souls, and were they permitted to *detail* to us the occasion of their condemnation and misery, we should no doubt hear what would make our ears to tingle, and our hearts to quail.

One would probably say, "I had a Christian relative who devoted much of his time and property to the spread of religion in the world. He was a man of talent, and frequently presided at Bible and Missionary meetings with great ability and effect. His fame as an accomplished speaker and devoted Christian spread through the whole country in which he lived, and I felt proud of my popular relation. He often called to see me, and made frequent and kind inquiries respecting my health, and the state of my business, and was evidently wishful that I should succeed in my temporal affairs. But, strange to say, he never made any inquiries respecting my soul. Having been invited by a gentleman, with whom I did considerable business, to meet a dinner party at his house on a certain Sabbath-day, I

consented and went. The party was very large, and as I wished to observe the etiquette of the table, and to make myself as agreeable as possible, I drank wine with nearly all the guests, and never suspected my having taken too much until on rising from the table, I felt it was with the greatest difficulty I could maintain a proper equilibrium. On my way home after midnight, I got into bad company, and was robbed of all the cash I had upon me. When I perfectly recovered from the effects of wine, I perceived with indescribable remorse my degradation, and solemnly resolved never more to be found in such circumstances. In the course of a few days my relative became acquainted with my conduct, and soon afterwards called upon me. O the pang I felt on seeing him approach, believing that he was coming to call me to an account for my wickedness; and I resolved to frame no apology, but make a frank confession of my guilt, and assure him of my fixed determination to become a religious man. He had great influence with me, and might have then used that influence with the happiest effect. But will fiends themselves believe that he never referred to the subject? He talked about the state of the weather, made several remarks on

political and commercial affairs, complimented me on the taste I had evinced in laying out my garden, instituted some inquiries relative to the trade in which I was engaged, and offered many suggestions how I might acquire a very handsome fortune. I heard all this with impatience, as I believed such observations were but preparatory to his entering upon another subject which had filled my soul with indescribable anguish, and I wished him at once to name it, that I might obtain some relief in confessing my sin, and in penitently telling him all my mind. But, let all the devils around me know, that he departed without ever mentioning the matter, and left his distressed relation in the most wretched and perilous circumstances, without having put forth one effort to relieve and save him. That was the turning point of my life. I now began to think more favourably of what I had done, and soon afterwards fell into a similar snare, but on returning home my horse fell with me, and in a few moments I found myself in this flame. My relation is still alive, and travelling about the country as usual, making eloquent speeches on the duty of Christians to save souls. Hypocrite! wretch! murderer! O that I had him here!

I would drag him through the hottest fire of hell, and with all the ardour which the never-dying worm inspires, I would imprecate ten thousand devils to seize him, and twice ten thousand curses to rest upon him!"

Another might be heard to say, "I lived in a Christian family for several years, but having so much to do on the Sabbath, I could seldom get to a place of worship. It is true we had family prayer regularly when alone, but in the presence of strangers it was dispensed with, which led me to conclude that the service was one to which my master and mistress attached very little importance, and from which I should certainly have absented myself, had it not been specified in my agreement that I was not to do so. My mind, on one occasion, was however deeply impressed, in consequence of the sudden death of a near relative, and when at family prayer that evening I wept much. On rising from my knees I felt that I could have given all I had for my master or mistress to speak with me on a preparation for death; but, although they both sympathized with me in my affliction, they touched not the subject that so greatly affected my heart. The next evening, a party of Christian friends being invited to the house, I felt some comfort in the

hope of then hearing much that would do me good, especially as a Minister and his wife were to be of the party. But judge of my surprise, that not one word was said on the subject of religion; but the conversation of the evening was the veriest gossip. The ladies talked about the fashions of the day, and the scandal of the neighbourhood; and the gentlemen, as they smoked their cigars and drank their wine, appeared to vie with each other who could relate the most facetious anecdotes, until the house re-echoed with peals of laughter. The guests departed about midnight; and although the ladies affectionately saluted each other at parting, and declared they had never spent a happier evening in all their lives, the proceedings of that party destroyed all my good impressions, and induced me to believe that there was no reality in religion. I continued in my situation until I married; and was frequently afterwards visited by my master and mistress, yet they never, on any occasion, said one word to me about my soul: and when I was seized with the disease which brought my body to the grave, and my soul to this place of torment, they frequently called to make kind inquiries about my health, and sent me presents of fruit, but never once

referred to my soul. O, cursed be their name for ever; for had they done their duty, I should not now have been in this lake of fire and brimstone! and cursed be that party whose trifling conduct destroyed the only deep convictions I ever had of the necessity of personal religion!"

A third might probably say, "I also was connected with a religious family. I was the daughter of Christian parents, and my father held an official station in the church. He was very regular in his religious duties, and was, with the exception of a hasty temper, considered a very good man. My mother was also a professor of religion, but evinced very little energy in the cause she espoused. As I was the only daughter, they professed great affection for me, and when a child gave me every thing for which I cried. I was therefore completely spoiled, annoying every visiter that came to the house; and when the Minister of the Church to which they belonged called one day, and talked to me about the necessity of children remembering their Creator, they interrupted him, saying, 'Emma is a good little girl, Sir.' Often did they detail to their friends my numerous excellencies, and speak of my talents with ecstacy, until I thought myself a perfect

prodigy, and became vain and conceited beyond all endurance. In due time they sent me to a fashionable boarding-school, where I was to be instructed in all the accomplishments, and be prepared to enter what they called 'good society.' During my absence from home, I received many letters from my parents, couched in the most endearing language, and sometimes containing a slight allusion to religion, but never so as to excite my fears, or lead me to suspect they thought my soul in danger of perishing. The school to which I was sent was not a religious one; and I was taught dancing, and allowed to read novels and other books of similar tendency, until my mind was filled with the most romantic and impure ideas. After I had been some time at school, and a few days before one of the vacations, I met with a person, whilst walking out, who supplied my father's house with milk, and was delighted to see him. He was a sincere Christian; and in conversation he told me that I must alter my conduct, and turn to the Lord, or I should lose my soul. This filled me with great indignation. To have been told this plain truth by any one would have been very unwelcome, but to be told it by my father's milk-man was what my proud and mortified spirit could not brook,

and I determined to let my parents know how I had been insulted. It is true that what he said excited some alarm in my mind as to my safety; but then I knew that my parents were religious, and greatly loved me, and as *they* had never spoken so to me I concluded the milk-man was a meddling fanatic. Accordingly, on my return, I mentioned the matter to my mother, who said, I must not think any thing of it, as the old man was very ignorant, and, although he had offended me, yet she believed he meant no harm. This confirmed me in my favourable opinion of my own state. When I had finished my education, my parents allowed me to dress in the gayest style, and to attend worldly parties, and balls two or three times a week. My mother told me that she was delighted to hear that I was greatly admired in the different circles into which I had been introduced: for she had heard from different quarters very laudatory remarks respecting my accomplishments and personal attractions. This was, of course, gratifying to my own mind, and led me to study, from morning to night, how I could make those attractions still more irresistible, until I took cold in returning from a ball, which laid the foundation of that fatal disease that terminated my earthly life. During

my illness I was treated with exquisite tenderness; and for the last few weeks of my mortal existence the Minister already referred to frequently called to inquire how I was, and to speak with me on the subject of salvation; but my parents thanked him each time for his kindness, and said, that as I was so very weak, and the Physician had ordered me to be kept quiet, they thought any conversation on that subject might excite me too much, and they hoped my affliction would in a short time take a favourable turn. The night on which I died my disease was attended with delirium; and during a lucid interval I perceived my mother weeping, and heard my father say something about a rock, but I understood not his meaning, for my delirium returned, and I remember nothing more that was said. I remained in a state of unconsciousness until the wailings of the damned, and the gnawings of this undying worm, revealed my fearful doom. My parents are now clothed in mourning, and receiving the condolence of numerous friends, to whom they are communicating with melancholy interest all the particulars of my affliction and death; and declaring that I was a most accomplished young lady, exciting universal admiration; and although they did not question me on the state of my

soul, lest it should injuriously excite me, yet they hoped I died in peace, as I nodded assent to what my father said when he directed me to rest upon the rock. O cruel parents, why did they allow me to die without knowing the state of my soul? Had they not been so blinded by their earthly affection they must have known that I was unprepared for death. I had never been converted; and if they had loved me as they ought to have done, they would have told me so, and instead of feeding the pride of my depraved heart, they would have wept and prayed over me until I had given myself to God; but, alas! all that my parents did for their only daughter was to garnish her as a victim for the slaughter. It is true they may say, 'We spared no expense to prepare our dear Emma for polite society, and we had the satisfaction of knowing that her accomplishments were attractive, and her talents much above mediocrity:' and with equal truth they may also say, 'Her lovely form we so much admired is now the food of worms, and, through our neglect of duty, her precious soul is for ever lost.' "

Perhaps a fourth might say to us, "My case is worse than any yet related. I was the son of a wealthy merchant, and occasionally attended a place of worship. One evening, whilst hear-

ing a celebrated Minister, I was awakened to a sense of my danger, and determined to amend my ways. My father was not religious; but many of his servants were, and although none of them had ever spoken to me on the subject of personal religion, I determined to open my mind to my father's head clerk, in whose piety and judgment I had the greatest confidence. I did so, and he encouraged me much; and gave me suitable advice on the important matter which so deeply affected my mind. I now became very much attached to him, and embraced every opportunity of being in his presence, to hear words whereby I might be saved. I thought if ever there was a good man upon the earth he was that man. But, alas! for me, at the time I thus made him my confidant was he embezzling my father's property. When his honesty was first suspected I indignantly repelled the allegation, and continued to do so until his guilt was clearly proved. My mind was fatally injured by this occurrence, as it induced me to believe there was no truth in experimental religion, and however consistent a man might apparently be as its professed recipient, I ever afterwards thought the outward form was but a mask put on for the purpose of accomplishing with better

effect some sinister object. I now embraced infidel principles, and the Bible was superseded by novels and plays; and the house of God was forsaken for the theatre and other places of dissipation, until I became a most flagrant transgressor: and when I had any fear as to my principles, the recollection of the conduct of my father's clerk immediately removed them. In this state I was seized with a malignant fever, and in a few days died raving mad. The wretch whose wickedness brought me to this place will soon be with me; and if any thing can mitigate my woe in this region of fire and wrath, it will be to see him here, insulted and tortured by every demon, and hear him weep and wail, and gnash his teeth for ever and for ever."

And it is not improbable that a fifth might add, "My case is the most deplorable. I was a pagan idolater, and sacrificed to the gods of the earth. Christians to whom the Gospel was given, and whose business it was to preach it to every creature, neglected their duty, and allowed myself and thousands of my countrymen to perish in our ignorance. Instead of giving their money for the spread of religion in the dark nations of the earth, some of them spent it in rich apparel, costly furniture, splendid

equipage; and in other modes of indulging the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Others left to their children more than was just, or beneficial; for that which they ought to have given for the support of Missions, and which would have been the means of saving myself and many others from coming to this place of misery, has in very many instances been the occasion of bringing their offspring here. Hark! Millions are now howling around me, and hear how bitterly they are cursing their unfaithful parents."

To be in any respect accessory to the loss of a soul is the very acme of all cruelty. O that every person implicated in this foul and satanic deed would solemnly pause until he compute the value of a soul, and what is comprehended in its loss! Let him examine its nature as a spiritual existence, endowed with immense powers of receiving pleasure or pain, and invested with immortality. Let him compute, if he can, the price of its redemption which justice demanded, and the Son of God paid in suffering and blood. Let him think of "the fire and brimstone," the "horrible tempest," the "smoke of the torment," the "bottomless pit," the "blackness of darkness," the "weeping and wailing," and other fearful representations which

the Scriptures give of the miseries of a lost soul. And when he has duly considered these things in their relation to both God and man, then let him proceed in his work of death if he dare! With the bleeding Lamb before his eyes, and the shrieks of the damned in his ears, let him destroy another soul if he dare! Nay, let him destroy another if he can! If conscience will allow him—if reason will allow him—if humanity will allow him! But conscience cries, Desist! Reason cries, Desist! Humanity cries, Desist! Is there a man in all the Christian church whose heart will still allow him to stain his skirts with the blood of souls? If there be, he should not only be expelled from the congregation of the godly, but blotted from the pages of the human kind, as he must be more of a demon than of a man to be capable of such cruelty. If on the loss of a soul both man and beast should be clothed in sackcloth; if every creature capable of emotion should join in one loud and doleful lamentation; if every tree of the forest, and herb of the field, should immediately droop like the weeping willow; if every dew-drop should be mingled with blood, to indicate the agony of maternal nature; and if the sun should put on his sable robes, as the first mourner on the

occasion, the expression of sorrow would indeed be affecting; but it would fall far short of giving us any adequate conception of the misery occasioned by the loss of a soul. It is cruel to destroy the character of man, either by artifice or falsehood; the property of man, either by fraud or violence; the life of man, as did the Spartans, for a mere pastime amusement; but what is character, however dear, property, however valuable, or life itself, however precious, when compared with the soul? Character may be regained, property may be recovered, and if a man die he shall live again, but when the soul is once lost it is lost for ever!

But he who is accessory to the loss of a soul, not only acts a cruel part to a fellow-creature, but places himself in direct opposition to the glorious designs of his Saviour's love. That he might save souls, he left the bosom of the Father, laid aside the form of God in which he had subsisted, took upon him the seed of Abraham, and appeared a babe in Bethlehem's manger. That he might save souls he enrolled himself with the peasantry of Judea, pursued the avocations of his reputed father, endured the insults of a wicked and perverse generation, and had not where to lay his head. That he might save souls, he encountered the great

adversary in the wilderness, wept over the guilty city of Jerusalem, agonized in the garden of Gethsemane, and bled upon the cross of Calvary. He, therefore, who is accessory to the loss of a soul, by the omission of duty, or by placing a stumbling-block in his brother's way, "destroys him for whom Christ died."

Take another view of the subject. The Apostle says, "Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." He shall "*save a soul from death!*" From spiritual death here, and from eternal death hereafter. And will not every Christian endeavour to save a soul from death? If he saw his neighbour's house on fire, would he not hasten to quench the flame? If he saw a fellow-creature drowning, would he not plunge into the river to his rescue, or furnish him with some means of escape? Or if he saw multitudes in the city dying of the plague, and he possessed an infallible remedy, would he not apply it without delay, that the plague might be stayed, and especially if his Sovereign had entrusted him with it for that purpose? But what is the saving of burning houses, drowning men, and dying multitudes, when compared with the saving of one soul from

death? He who saves a soul from death performs a greater work than he that saves a land from famine, a city from the plague, or a country from an invading foe. Then let every Christian bring all his capabilities to bear upon the accomplishment of this important and momentous work. Reader, have you talents at your command? in this work let them be efficiently employed. Have you influence in society? in this work let it be diligently exerted. Have you zeal in your heart? in this work let it ardently burn. Have you devotion in your spirit? in this work let it ascend as incense before the throne of God. Have you wealth at your disposal? in this work let it be liberally expended. Your duty is plain, and for its performance humanity is entreating and Christianity is exhorting, importuning, and commanding. The case is urgent, for sinners are perishing,—perishing whilst you are reading, perishing by thousands, perishing within the reach of help, perishing in your city, and at your door! Therefore, go out quickly, and what you do, do at once, do it with all your might, do it in spite of all opposition, and upon your head shall abundantly descend the blessings of them that are ready to perish.

Nor are these the only motives the Christian has to engage in this interesting work; for in converting a sinner from the error of his ways he not only saves a soul from death, but *hides a multitude of sins.* Every sinner is guilty of a multitude of sin,—sins of omission and sins of commission,—sins of the heart, sins of the lips, and sins of the life; but when conversion takes place all these sins are covered by the great propitiatory sacrifice, blotted out by the precious blood of Christ, and divine justice sees them no more. But the word rendered "hide" is susceptible of another meaning; and I am much inclined to believe that its meaning here is to *withhold* from sight, rather than to *withdraw* from sight, or to hide by *prevention,* rather than by *covering.* "One sinner," we are told, "destroys much good." He destroys good desires, good principles, and good morals; but when converted, a multitude of sins are prevented: and not only sins which he would have committed, but sins in others, who might have been influenced by his example, or been so unfortunate as to fall into some of his destructive snares. For instance, had any person succeeded in converting Voltaire, Hume, Paine, Owen, or those deeply degraded beings, whose "paths incline unto death," and "whose

guests are in the depths of hell," what infidelity and blasphemy, what intemperance and lasciviousness, what robberies and murders, and what other forms of vice, ruining many families, breaking many hearts, and destroying many souls, would have been prevented! And, on the other hand, what multitudes of sins have been prevented by the agents who led Luther, Wesley, Whitfield, and other successful Ministers, to the foot of the cross, and the enjoyment of salvation! Sins which might have brought the fearful judgments of heaven upon families, communities, and nations!

Reader, if you wish to benefit not only the present generation, but generations yet unborn, and to give a moral impulse to the world which shall live when you are dead, labour to convert a sinner. There lives in yonder cottage a poor man, with whom you have great influence, but who is without God and without hope in the world. He is purchased by the same blood, and destined for the same eternity as yourself. He is capable of receiving instruction, and may, by the blessing of God upon your efforts, be brought to the enjoyment of salvation. Will you not, therefore, make a vigorous attempt to secure the

accomplishment of that important object? Remember, if you, by the blessing of heaven, succeed in converting him, however little interest the event may excite in this degenerate world, it will be deeply interesting to the angelic host, and give such a moral impulse to society, as may, in a few years be felt at the very antipodes, and at last appear in tens of thousands of glorified spirits, at the right hand of God.

There are also perishing multitudes in the heathen world, calling for the Gospel; and many ambassadors in the Christian church ardently desiring to preach it to them. Will you not therefore assist in furnishing the necessary funds? The Saviour commands you to do so; and should any of the Heathen perish through your culpable neglect, how will you meet them at the bar of God? May the Lord in mercy hide you from their upbraiding glance, as they turn from the judgment-seat to meet their fearful doom!

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* In the present edition this has been done.

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